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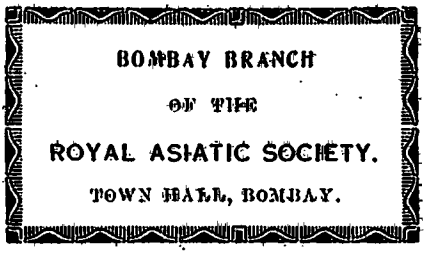

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TEN YEARS

OF

IMPERIALISM IN FRANCE:

IMPRESSIONS OF A "FLANEUR"

(General Eber).

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WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
MDCCCLXII

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ERRATA.

Page 34, line 29, *for* "£2,400,000" *read* "£60,000,000."
Page 113, line 28, *for* "25 millions" *read* "20 millions."
Page 131, line 2, *for* "French institutions" *read* "French initiative.'
Page 179, line 22, *for* "vigorous" *read* "rigorous."

PREFACE.

In offering his Impressions to the public, the "Flâneur" must apologise for his foreign name, and explain its meaning. His apology is that no word exists in the English language which would convey a correct idea of a Flâneur. He is not an "Idler," as is generally supposed; on the contrary, intense activity of all faculties is one of the most necessary qualifications of a Flâneur. Nor is he an "Observer;" for this would imply the concentration of his faculties towards a definite aim and in a certain direction.

The true Flâneur has a horror of all definite aim; he never seeks—he trusts to chance. His mind is like a sensitive blank photograph plate, ready for any impression which may present itself.

The internal state of France has attracted considerable attention of late, and rather unsettled ideas about Impérialism. Some impressions fresh from the spot may therefore not be without interest at this moment.

CONTENTS.

I. NEW PARIS,..... 1

II. WHAT IS THE COST, AND WHO PAYS?..... 14

III. LUTETIA PARISIORUM,..... 28

IV. GARRISON AND CAMP,..... 52

V. TERRESTRIAL PROVIDENCE AND ITS DRAWBACKS,..... 72

VI. TERRESTRIAL PROVIDENCE AND ITS ADVANTAGES,..... 89

VII. THE IMPERIAL FERTILISING SYSTEM,..... 106

VIII. MONEYMANIA,..... 120

IX. THE FIRST OF OCTOBER,..... 134

X. SOCIALISM,..... 151

XI. DEATH AND RESURRECTION,..... 169

XII. BODY AND MIND,..... 186

XIII. GOSSIP,..... 200

TEN YEARS OF IMPERIALISM IN FRANCE.

CHAPTER I.

NEW PARIS.

AMONG the many clever rhapsodies of Edgar Poe, there is perhaps none which exercises more attraction than his 1002d Arabian Night, where he takes up the old favourite Sinbad the Sailor and sends him on a new journey. He goes westward instead of continuing his explorations and adventures south and eastward, and relates what he has seen in this age of railways, steamers, and telegraphs. The story is so incredible that the Eastern monarch, who has taken so piously all the former stories of Scheherazade, begins to suspect her game, and ends the Arabian Nights in truly old Oriental fashion, by cutting off the head of the fair story-teller.

This rhapsody always recurs to my mind whenever I visit Paris, after even a short absence. Sinbad the Sailor, like a true Oriental, takes his *kiéf* between his journeys, and allows an interval of several years to elapse between each of them. What would be the effect on this simple-minded traveller if, after some

ten years of absence, brought on from Marseilles by the express train and packed into one of the monster omnibuses, he were set down on the Place du Palais Royal?

A traveller of modest means, in search of gain and curiosities, he would probably look out for the Rue des Quinzevingts or Beaujolais, to take up his old quarters in one of the many *hôtels garnis* with which these streets abounded ten years ago. Stunned by the rapid pace of the railway train which brought him from the south, and made drowsy by the omnibus journey over the smooth Macadam, so different from the old orthodox Parisian Barricade pavement, he would think himself under a hallucination, owing to the mischievous designs of the lord of the fiery steeds, or else of the ugly wizard perched up on that uncouth construction which he has just left. He would rub his eyes and try to awake, but would only become more and more confused. There is, indeed, something which seems like an acquaintance, the Palais Royal, or rather the Palais National as Sinbad remembers it; but what are all those huge palaces with their colonnades, that still more magnificent palace tower in front, that endless street of palace-like bazaars which extend eastward, that new tower to the left looking down on a new square of equally palace-like buildings, that other graceful tower further down which stretches its stone lacework high up in the air? Poor Sinbad is bewildered, and expects every moment to be taken up by some bright Peri, or frightened by the appearance of some winged colossal Gin.

He is, indeed, seized hold of by the arm, and starts; but it is neither Peri nor Gin who takes that liberty; it is the good-natured Arab who keeps the shop of mauresque finery at the corner of the Place du Palais

Royal, and who, seeing the colour and garb of the traveller, forgets for a moment that he is a French citizen, and takes pity on the troubles of his kindred.

Let us suppose the traveller fairly housed by his care: and, having made his toilet in the Bains Chinois, sallying forth, accompanied by his cicerone, to see the marvels of new Paris. The cicerone, who has considerably improved and refined his own Oriental imaginative power by contact with his new compatriots, is proud to show off the glories of the country which has adopted, or rather annexed, him. Seeing the dispositions of his companion, he conceives the idea of astonishing him by showing him new Paris. Having taken him all about the new Louvre and the Place Napoleon III., Sinbad, like a good Mohammedan, rejects the offer to see the galleries which are filled with representations in stone and on canvass of animated beings, and the couple, passing over the new Bridge of Solferino, pass along the Quay d'Orsay to the Boulevard de Latour Maubourg, which runs along the western outskirts of the Invalides. The cicerone does not neglect to draw the attention of the traveller to the magnificent new facing of stone with which the banks of the Seine have been protected, as well as to the broad paved towing-paths and wharves. Having taken him to cast a glance at the Church of St Clotilde, he leads him into the Boulevard de l'Alma and across the Pont de l'Alma to see the Palais de l'Industrie. Then, going through the Arc de l'Etoile into the Avenue de l'Impératrice, he passes by the new quarter which has arisen there to the Bois de Boulogne. In coming back they turn to the left into the Boulevard de Monceau, and having looked at the glittering cupolas of the Russian Church,

go through the newly-laid-out Parc de Monceau into the Boulevard Malesherbes. Passing down the Rue Royale they get into the Rue de Rivoli, and proceed along it to the Place du Louvre to look at the Tower of St Germain l'Auxerrois, then on again through the same street to the Place du Châtelet and the Avenue Victoria to see the new theatres, the Fontaine Birague, and the Tour de St Jaques de la Boucherie; then crossing the new Pont au Change to see the Palais de Justice and the Sainte Chapelle, they go up the Boulevard de Sebastopol to the Hotel de Cluny. Turning into the Boulevard St Germain, they go back by Notre Dame and the Pont d'Arcole to the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville. Following the Rue de Rivoli eastward, they saunter to the Place de la Bastille, and thence to the Boulevard du Prince Eugène. At the end of it, passing the great infantry barracks on the corner of the Boulevard du Temple, they get into the Boulevard de Magenta; from thence into the Boulevard de Strasbourg, and back by the Boulevard de Sebastopol into the Rue de Rivoli.

"And where is Paris?" asks Sinbad. "This is new Paris," is the reply. I don't happen to know what the politics of the Arab shopkeeper at the corner of the Place du Palais Royal are—whether he is a supporter or an adversary of the Imperial government, so there are two versions of the account which Sinbad the Sailor might give of what he saw in Paris.

The first is as follows:—

"While drinking one evening sweet Shiraz wine with some of my boon-companions, and relating to them my past adventures, I was seized with a violent desire to see the wonderful things which had passed in the land of the West called Frengistan since I had been there,

and of which I had heard, through divers natives of those regions, who are to be recognised by the strange black felt tubes on their heads, and by coats cut away in front and hanging down behind like swallow-tails. Having heard, likewise, that the mighty King of Frengistan had given orders that the Sea of Yonistan should be allowed to flow into the Sea of Arabia, I took my ship in that direction; but finding that the orders had not been yet executed, owing to the cunning devices of a neighbouring mighty island queen, I continued my journey into the great ocean of the West. After many days' and months' journey, and many perils, I arrived at the chief port of Frengistan, called Marsilia. Having disposed of my vessel, which was bought up to be shown for money to the natives, I proceeded to the capital of the country, which lies many miles inland, on the banks of a muddy unwholesome stream. By the aid of the genius of fire, which a great wizard called Fulton has subjected to his power, I was carried by fiery steeds in a few hours to the capital; or rather to the site where it formerly stood.

"When I was last in that place the whole country was under the rule of a bloodthirsty foreign tyrant called Liberty, who kept the people in dingy, high, and narrow houses, from which he drove them forth from time to time to wage war against each other, in order that he might feed on their corpses and drink their blood. At last the scion of their good old Padishah, who had ruled over many seas and lands, came back from across the water, where he had been driven by the tyrant. He assembled his followers and struggled with the oppressor until he drove him away. There was great joy among the people. Having thus come to the throne,

the new Padishah sallied forth with a numerous host to wage war in the east and south, and even in the far land of Tshin, bringing back great glory and treasure. After this, in order to make the return of the tyrant impossible, he destroyed his den, the dingy old town, and built another town, opening out large roads, protected by huge fortified places called barracks, and flanked by trees. Alongside of these roads are magnificent palaces for the people to dwell in, and all over the town delicious gardens with fountains, lakes, and kiosks, destined, above all, for women and children. He cleared the river by building huge walls alongside of it, and threw bridges across it. Being a pious man, he built great mosques; and for his people, who like mummery, he built large halls in which they can indulge in that pastime, and his people are the happiest people of the earth."

Now for the other version :—

"A great calamity has befallen the capital of Frengistan since I had last seen it; the country was then governed by a divan of the wisest in the land, who were called up from all parts to assist with their counsel to make the people happy. Since then the nephew of a great tyrant and warrior, who had already tried several times to seize the crown, introduced himself into the palace under the pretext of contributing to the same aim. The people, being themselves true, believed in his word; but they soon repented, for one night he seized hold of the wisest and most influential men in the country, shutting them up or driving them out of the country; the people who came to their assistance were destroyed by his troops, and he became the ruler of the country. To punish the people for

their hostility, and to secure his dominion, he determined to destroy their old town, which they had learned to fortify and defend. He summoned workmen and cunning artificers from the whole country, and constructed for himself and his favourites a city of palaces fair to behold and easy to defend. In order to carry out this plan he taxed the people heavily, and kept up a large armed force of foot and horse ready to obey his slighest wink. The country has a heavy time of it."

It is difficult to say which is the greater marvel—to look, after some years of absence, at the result obtained in building this imperial city, or to watch the process by which the old town of Paris is transformed. The first intimation which the Flâneur gets of the impending revolution, are a number of placards over the shops of the doomed quarter, informing him that, "pour cause de démolition," the business is transferred to some other place. He had better seize the opportunity, and cast a last glance on those gloomy shops, dark alleys, damp walls, and impress himself with the life which animates those abodes; for axe and hammer, as handled by the *Edilité* of Paris, are like death: they wait for no man's pleasure, and strike suddenly. Another week or two, and another leaf will have been torn out of the book of historical Paris. When he returns all will be changed. There will be still the placards and the houses, but lifeless, almost like a plague-stricken quarter; most of the shops shut up, doors closed, the windows bare, and without any of those appendages of clothes hung out to dry, flower-pots cunningly hidden, housewives cleaning the rooms or adorning themselves—all of which give those streets their character, and suggest frequently a romance for every flat. Only here and there a last trace of the

life which is gone: an occasional window displaying still its curtains, or a solitary shopkeeper showing his, or probably her, face at the unusual apparition of a human being; for, as a general rule, women seem to stick to their old haunts far more tenaciously than men. In this case, at any rate, the resemblance to cats, which is uncourteously attributed to them, is fully borne out. Another week or so, and the doomed quarter is hidden in a dense cloud of dust, and closed by palings. Behind this paling the work of destruction is going on merrily.

It seems almost as if there was a good deal of excitement in such work, for it does not proceed in that quiet machine-like way which becomes a second nature with the day-labourer, but by fits and starts. The roof seems evidently an impediment to the merry work, for there is a remarkable hurry visible in getting it off. This once gone, as well as the uppermost storey under the mansarde, which is of frail structure, mostly wooden frames filled out with lath and plaster, the excitement begins. Old as the houses are, they are often very solid—above all, the oldest of them—the main wall being invariably of cut stone. As there are almost always lookers-on, there is considerable emulation in the destruction of the upper floors which are visible. The removal of a window-lintel, of a stone larger than the rest, and, above all, the crash of a whole block of rubbish, are so many triumphs. In this way a few days suffice to raze a block of buildings to the ground. The whole south-western face of the Tuileries, about one-third of the whole building, disappeared last autumn in a couple of weeks. It is true, there was an unusual interest in the case, for, one after another, the most important epochs of French

history which had left their traces on the surface of the walls were laid open in reversed chronological order. From eagles and bees, through fleurs-de-lis, back again to eagles and bees, and through Phrygian caps and fasces of lictors, back again to the original fleur-de-lis. It was a practical course of French history for the last eighty years, and one after another these emblems of the past went down to swell the mass of rubbish below.

Fast as the old houses disappear, the material of which they were constructed disappears equally fast. It is usually bought up by the builders engaged to construct the houses on both sides of the thoroughfare. Consisting almost always of more or less regularly cut stone, it is available for foundations and partition walls, but scarcely ever for the front, which is built of large cut blocks. As soon as a little space is gained, the material is ranged in layers ready for use. The thoroughfare is scarcely traced out, when right and left the foundations are dug for the new houses. Much depends, of course, on the locality, for all are not equally favoured. Thus, on the Boulevard Malesherbes opened last summer, while the houses towards the Madeleine were ready almost as soon as the Boulevard itself, those higher up towards Monceau are only just beginning to show above ground. The raising of the new structures goes on at the same rate as the demolition. As all houses must be built according to one model, varying only in some of the smaller details, a skill has been acquired by the masons, stonecutters, and even the common workmen, which reminds one very much of a manufacturing process. There are the same square pilasters piled up on the ground-floor, to serve for the large open shops; they are connected and strengthened by iron bars of the same

pattern; over these come cornices, windows, flats and roofs of equal height. Still monotony is cleverly avoided by the disposition and ornamentation of the windows and balconies, and the effect is one of general harmony. The numerous chalk-stone quarries in the basin of the Seine offer inexhaustible stores of building material within easy reach. These yellow square blocks, and iron, cast and wrought, enter most largely into all these constructions. The returns of the taxes levied by the town of late years on building material, will give the best idea of what has been built. Since the large works began, each year from 800,000 to 1,000,000 tons of cast and wrought iron, from 40,000 to 50,000 tons of cement, 4,000,000 hectolitres of lime, and 400,000 stères of stone, paid duty. The transport of these materials required a permission each year for above 3500 waggons and above 10,000 carts.

A striking instance of how quickly this immense material is worked into shape was visible last summer in the large block on the Boulevard des Capucines fronting the site for the new opera-house, and destined to serve as a monster hotel. Its area is considerably larger than that of the grand Hôtel du Louvre. In July the frontage towards the boulevard was above the ground-floor only, and by the end of October the building was under roof. Quite as quick in proportion were the western front of the Bibliothèque in the Rue de Richelieu, and the Jeu de Paumes in the Garden of the Tuileries, run up. And yet, in spite of this rapidity, the style of building is not only solid, but almost what might be called monumental. An English builder accustomed to leases of ninety-nine years, must be quite shocked at the waste of labour, cost, and material. Setting aside, however, the orna-

mentation, it is not so great as it appears. The quarries are within easy communication by rail and water; the stone is soft, and cuts easily; and although the simplest kind of cranes and windlasses are used, a smaller number of workmen seem to be employed, compared with what a building in brick would require. It must be remembered that the works have been going on for years, and that they are in the hands of a comparatively small number of *entrepreneurs*, who have been able by this time to organise a complete staff of skilled workmen, who have attained a high degree of perfection.

The demolition and reconstruction of houses, the building or repairing of churches, towers, palaces, markets, and barracks, and the opening of new streets and thoroughfares, represent only one side of the labour and cost bestowed on this work of regeneration. There is another which is equally important, and which comes under the general denomination of "travail des ponts et chaussées." It comprises the construction and reconstruction of bridges and quays, new pavement, *trottoirs*, plantations, squares, and the extension of sewers and water conduits. Three new bridges have been thrown across the Seine—the Pont Napoleon III., high up towards Charenton; the Pont de Solferino, opposite the Garden of the Tuileries; and the Pont de l'Alma, connecting the boulevard of the same name on the two sides of the river. Nineteen millions of francs were required to redeem the tolls on nine bridges where they still existed. Most of these bridges have been repaired; some of them, like the Pont au Change, the Pont St Michel, and the Pont d'Arcole, have been almost rebuilt; while those leading from the Cité into the Isle St Louis

are still in course of reconstruction. Great part of the embankment on both sides of the Seine has been renewed from the Pont de Constantine down to the Pont de l'Alma—that is, well-nigh seven kilomètres of walls, varying from fifty to eighty feet in height—and provided with wharves and broad towing-paths. The new thoroughfares have been provided with a complete system of sewerage and water-conduits; besides which, new main sewers have been laid down in several of the old thoroughfares, nominally in the Quartier du Louvre. To this must be added the metamorphosis of the Bois de Boulogne, of the Champs Elysées, the Avenue de l'Impératrice, the planting of trees on the new boulevards, and a number of smaller squares opened out and converted into gardens.

A length of about 20,000 mètres of thoroughfares had been opened from the heart of the town in every direction. As on both sides of the Seine the ground rises gradually towards the outskirts, the opening means not only the clearing away of the old houses which are in the way, but considerable cuttings, and in some cases almost levellings of intervening hills, as, for instance, in the higher parts of the Boulevard de Sebastopol, especially the southern side of it towards the Barrière de l'Enfer, and in the Boulevard Malesherbes, where the houses on the left side lean on a hill as high as they are themselves.

Other 10,000 mètres are already marked out for further openings. Indeed, as for plans, there is no want of them; the town has not in vain £50,000 to £60,000 for plans and *alignements* on its budget; the portefeuilles are full of them, and others are daily spoken of.

Augustus found Rome built of wood, and he left it built of marble. The Emperor Napoleon, who is often accused of a predilection for Roman Cæsarism, is in a fair way of effecting in his capital a change scarcely less complete than that accomplished by his prototype in Rome.

CHAPTER II.

WHAT IS THE COST, AND WHO PAYS?

THESE are two questions which must disturb the equanimity even of the flâneur, and excite his curiosity.

The second question, the more difficult at first sight, is as yet easier to answer than the first. There seems to be a temptation in building and making improvements, quite as seductive as in the search after gold, curiosities, and old books. Every lady and gentleman who has had the good fortune to inherit an estate will subscribe to this—above all, if she or he did not much expect the good fortune. Some have strength enough to resist the temptation, and these often fall into the opposite extreme; but if they once yield, it is difficult to say where they will stop. At first there is to be only a little alteration which is absolutely required; but soon it is perceived that the old part nearest to it looks very bad beside it, and cannot remain; and so it goes on in an ever-increasing proportion.

Something similar has taken place in the good town of Paris, since the Imperial Government has directed its destinies. Every new improvement suggested others on a larger scale; and, as the schemes expanded, the administrative organisation was found insufficient to carry them

into effect. At first it was attempted to supply this defect by introducing new wheels into the mechanism. The result was such complication and confusion of accounts, that at last a special service had to be created for these undertakings, and an Imperial decree, of the 4th November 1858, established the Caisse des Travaux de Paris, under the guarantee of the town of Paris, and under the authority of the Prefect de la Seine, which is intrusted with the financial service of all the works begun since that period, leaving only the works then in process of execution in the hands of the town. As some of these works are not yet finished, and their definitive amounts not made up, no correct idea can be formed of the total cost. Nothing gives a better idea of the confusion which prevailed before the establishment of the Caisse des Travaux than the different accounts in the budget of the town. There were general funds, special funds, supplementary credits, extraordinary expenses, implying a number of diverse operations, chiefly caused by the purchases and sales of ground, and by the uncertainty of the contribution paid by the state each year for the different works. All this together makes it rather difficult to know the cost, although these accounts themselves throw considerable light on the *modus operandi*.

If one looks over them, one is involuntarily reminded of the fable of the monkey trying to divide the bit of cheese equally between the two cats, one-half becoming somehow or other always too large and the other too small. First comes the project of the budget, which balances tolerably. But it is found that reality surpasses expectation, and larger works are undertaken than were projected. The expense of these likewise surpasses expectation, and supplementary credits are decreed, which

again leave a surplus. These are absorbed by fresh expenses, and so on; and, at the end of the year, the budget is no more to be recognised. Thus in 1858, the original budget shows 70 millions of francs for the revenue, and 72 millions for the expenses; and the final account 109 millions revenue, and 85 millions of expenses. In 1859 the original budget is 83½ millions for revenue, and the expenses 77 millions; the final account, on the contrary, 108 millions for revenue, and 90 millions for expenses.

The secret of this power of expansion is, that the resources of the town are great, and that they are a strong temptation to expense. Since 1852 the ordinary revenues have been each year surpassing the ordinary expenses in a greater proportion. Thus, while in the first of these years the ordinary revenues exceeded by 17½ millions of francs the ordinary expenses; in 1859, the last year before the extension of the *barrières*, they exceeded them by 30 millions; so that, in this space of time, about 184 millions of francs were disposable for extraordinary expenses. General causes, like increasing population and prosperity, influx of strangers, &c., had no doubt the greatest share in this result, but something is due likewise to the revision of the tariff in 1854 and 1855, which raised the tax on coal, candles, grease, meat, cattle, fruits, vegetables, hackney-coaches, and omnibuses, and established new taxes on iron used for building, ice, gas, besides an entrance-fee on the Bourse.

Since 1859, a great change has taken place in the financial situation of the town, which tends still more to increase the resources. A law of the 16th of June of that year incorporates the *banlieue* with the town, and thus extends the limits of the latter to the fortifications. Paris, which had until then 1,174,346 inhabitants, on a

surface of 3402 hectares, found itself, on the 1st of January, with a surface of 8502 hectares, and 1,525,942 inhabitants and taxpayers. The two years which have elapsed since this incorporation are scarcely sufficient for appreciating the whole financial importance of this measure; but, from the results which were obtained in 1860, and from those anticipated for 1861, some idea of this may be formed. In the first year, the newly-annexed suburban part added 15 millions to the revenue, while it increased the ordinary expense only by 11½ millions; so that the ordinary revenue left a surplus of 33 millions of francs. Adding to this 6½ millions of extraordinary revenues, arrières, &c., we have almost 40 millions available for great works. If we get only as much for the year 1861, although the valuation is higher, we have 80 millions, which, with the 184 available since 1852, make 264 millions of francs, or £10,416,000.

But this sum represents only a part of the total expenditure of the town on the new works. Besides this sum there are first the four loans: the first, of 25 millions, in 1848; the second, in 1851, of 50 millions, for the opening of the Rue de Rivoli, and the construction of the Halles Centrales (the chief market-place); that in 1855, of 60 millions, for the termination of the Rue de Rivoli, the Boulevard de Sebastopol (right bank of the Seine), the Avenue Victoria, and the opening of the approach of the Hotel de Ville; lastly, another loan of 60 millions, authorised in 1860, on account of the 180 millions, according to the arrangement of the 3d May 1858, of which more by-and-by. Such was the credit of the good old town in the beginning, that the first two loans were issued at a premium; but, as the other two were issued under par, we may keep the round numbers, and

add 195 millions more to the sum, which thus swells to £18,216,000.

To these must be added the sums which have been realised from the sale of ground which remained after the laying out of the thoroughfares, and the sale of material gained by the demolitions, as well as the subsidy paid by the State for some of the works. As the accounts, as well as the works, are far from being completed, it is impossible to estimate the amount; but, according to the Annuaire du Crédit Public, by M. Horn, for the Rue de Rivoli and the Boulevard de Sebastopol (right bank of the Seine) alone, from 1851 to 1857, 25 millions of francs have been realised by the sales, and 38½ millions, in round numbers, paid by the State; while for the others, up to 1859, the sale realised 6 millions of francs—in all, 69½ millions. To this must be added the 19 millions inscribed on the municipal debt as the price at which the tolls over nine bridges were bought in by the town, and 7½ millions inscribed as subsidy to the Company of the Boulevard de Strasbourg—total, £21,766,000. But it may well be questioned whether even this sum represents the whole amount actually expended by the town. The decree, namely, which established the Caisse des Travaux de Paris in 1858, authorises this institution to issue bonds within certain limits, fixed after deliberation of the municipal body, and sanctioned by the Emperor. There is no doubt that this power has been largely made use of, for out of the last loan (1860) 40 millions are expressly destined to buy up such bonds; the question would be only to what extent it has been used, and this probably few people could answer. Equally difficult, if not altogether impossible, it would be

to calculate what the State has spent on its own account on public buildings, and what the share of private speculation was in the cost of the transformation of Paris.

The works undertaken by the town are of two sorts: those of which the town has to bear the whole cost, such as the construction of the Halles Centrales, or the portion of the Rue de Rivoli extending from the Place du Louvre to the Hôtel de Ville; and those towards which the State contributes, in a greater or smaller proportion. At the outset, when the first experiments were tried, this proportion varied according to circumstances. Thus, in the portion of the Rue de Rivoli from the Place du Louvre to the Rue de la Bibliothèque, the State paid one-half; from the Passage Delorme to the Rue de la Bibliothèque, two-thirds of the expense. The reason was, that the original plan, according to which the colonnade was to stop at the Rue de l'Echelle, was changed, and the colonnade was continued all along the Louvre to the Rue du Roule: while to the rest of the works the State contributes one-third. Indeed, since the arrangement of the 3d May 1858 regulated this point systematically, one-third of the cost is the invariable rule.

The treaty and the institution of the Caisse des Travaux de Paris may indeed be said to have first reduced this colossal enterprise to a system. Before that the thing was in considerable confusion. At first, when the plans were in embryo, and the desires still moderate, the work was left in the hands of the municipality, and a special fund was created to defray the expense. This special fund, supplied by loans, contributions from the State, and the sale of surplus ground and material, was kept completely distinct from the general budget, which had only to provide for the premium, interest,

and redemption of the loans. These special funds were at the same time destined for specific operations, like the opening of the Rue de Rivoli, the Bois de Boulogne, the Halles Centrales, and the Boulevard de Sebastopol (right bank of the Seine); but long before these works were completed the desire arose for new ones, for which credits were granted to the town on the budget, and the effect of which was in a few years hopeless confusion.

It was necessary to put an end to this confusion, especially as still greater works were under consideration. It was therefore resolved to let the works carried on by special funds be completed as they had been begun, namely, by the municipality; but for all the others to reverse the process—to establish a special institution to carry on the works, and to restrict the municipal administration to supplying the funds, by special credits allowed yearly for that purpose, which, however, form part of the general budget. Besides this, all the produce of the sales of ground and material are likewise paid into the Caisse des Travaux, which out of these funds has to pay all the cost of dispossession and indemnities, and that of the works. It is scarcely necessary to add that the bonds which the Caisse issues are on account of the town.

With this new machinery the Government hopes to carry into effect all the great works ordered by the decree of the 11th August 1855, such as the Boulevard Sebastopol on the left bank of the Seine, the Boulevard de St Germain, the Boulevard du Nord, &c.; the works ordered by the law of 1857; and, above all, the thoroughfares which were the object of the arrangement of 3d May 1858 between the State and the town.

Ten years are allowed for the completion of this last category of works; the State pays one-third of the total expense, which proportion is, however, not to exceed 50 millions. The subsidy is only to be paid in proportion to the works executed. The expenses incurred each year are to be submitted to the control of a special commission, composed of a Conseiller d'Etat, an Inspecteur-Général des Finances, and an Inspecteur-Général des Ponts et Chaussées. The payments by the State for former works are to be, in 1859, 2 millions, in 1860 4 millions, and in 1861 6 millions, which amounts figure above among the extraordinary receipts in those years. The 50 millions is to be paid in equal proportions in seven years, beginning from 1862.

After all these large works completed, or in course of execution, and after the large sums expended, it might be a matter of curiosity to know the financial situation of the town. The ordinary receipts for the year 1861 are estimated at 101 millions of francs in round numbers; the current expenses, including the interest for the new loan, at 68 millions. The debt of the town is taken at 168 millions, representing in interest, sinking fund, &c., a charge of 18 millions. The new loan, comprised in the debt, represents already a portion of the outlay of 180 millions to be spent in the coming seven years; but as the works always cost more than the estimates, we may suppose the whole sum added to the present debt, which swells thus to 248 millions, or two and a half times the present yearly revenue. When the works are finished, and if the ordinary balance is not disturbed, there would be at least 33 millions of surplus each year, which would pay back the whole debt in a few years. Thus, for the present, the situation is by no means bad;

on the contrary, all depends, of course, whether still further works will not be found necessary.

It cannot be expected that so complete a revolution can be effected without causing considerable outcry.

First, there are a number of private interests which must be sacrificed. A law of dispossession for public utility must always raise adversaries, and in this case there are several circumstances which considerably aggravate it. The law of 1852 on this subject orders the dispossession to take place by a simple decree. As in all official matters, great secrecy prevails in this respect; there is no public discussion which might throw light on the subject, and at the same time prepare people for the contingency. The object of the secrecy is no doubt to prevent jobbing, which would take place were the matter divulged and discussed beforehand; but people feel nevertheless the hardship of the measure, and consequently attribute the worst motives to this secrecy. There are plenty of insinuations as to the great prophesying power of people in favour, who somehow or other always contrive to buy cheap in those unfashionable quarters destined for destruction.

Then there are complaints about the arbitrary manner in which the authorities proceed with dispossessions and indemnities. These are fixed either by mutual understanding or else by jury; but as all is done under the authority of the Préfet de la Seine—that is, the party interested—there is an impression that the mode of proceeding opens a door to favouritism on one side, and injustice and annoyance on the other. The opening of the Boulevard de Malesherbes became, above all, an object of complaint and criticism. Many private

hôtels of wealthy people not exactly conspicuous for their adherence to the Imperial Government, had to be razed to the ground, to the great inconvenience of the owners. They could afford to make more noise than the inhabitants of the poorer quarters, although the hardship in this latter case was far greater. The minor industries of Paris are very stationary, and become soon acclimatised to the quarter in which they are once established. They have their regular *clientèle*, which belongs likewise to the quarter. All this is of a sudden dispersed in all directions. It is more than a simple change of quarter; it may be sometimes ruin.

To these specific complaints comes the general one of dearness. The new houses, built in an expensive manner, and opening out on the fine new thoroughfares, could not be let at low prices; and all other houses followed their example, and raised their rents in some places to double within the last few years. This told most heavily on Government *employés* and others having fixed salaries; most of these have had to migrate to the villages in the vicinity of Paris.

The raising of house-rents, together with the increase of the taxes on articles of consumption, has extended this dearness to all provisions and necessaries. To the last two complaints even the stranger will subscribe. There is full equality in this respect, and every one has to pay for the transformation of Paris.

Politicians and national economists have complaints of their own: these relate not merely to the present but likewise to the future. The first is, that Paris has become a pashalik with which the Prefect of the Seine has been invested. It is a municipality merely by name and courtesy, and is administered by a commission named

by the Pasha. It acts under the guidance of the Government, and is free from all responsibility or control of the people. It may and does commit injustice; it may and does squander the resources; it may and does impose charges as and where it pleases. A *régime* like this, if it lasts, cannot but extinguish all municipal traditions, of which the town has so much reason to be proud, and ruin the finances of the town.

The great demolitions are a wanton destruction of capital, and thus there is a double waste; the unnatural fostering of the building industry, and the changes consequent on it, tend to disturb all healthy development of the town. The situation is artificial; to keep it up greater sacrifices are daily required; the time will come when these are no more possible, and then a crisis must follow.

As usual in such cases, there is much exaggeration and a good deal of truth in these complaints.

The rights of labour and *ateliers nationaux* are not an invention of the Imperial Government; it has inherited them from its predecessor, the Republic. The principle that it is the duty of the State to interfere in the relations between capital and labour in favour of the latter as the weaker of the two, was not only avowed by the Government of 1848, but acted upon, although, as every one knows, with little success. The arguments of brute force used in the days of June to prove the fallacy of these socialistic ideas, although overpowering for the moment, were triumphantly refuted by the masses on the 10th of December 1848, when Cavaignac, the champion of these arguments, had to make way for Louis Napoleon; and on the 2d of December 1851, when these selfsame masses applauded the application of similar arguments against their adversaries, and

insured the triumph of their own ideas, by the election of Napoleon III. as Emperor of the French.

To solve practically this social problem, and to heal the breach between *bourgeois* and *ouvrier*, became thus one of the most arduous tasks to which the new monarch was pledged, and on the success of which his own safety depended.

The transformation of Paris represents one side of this solution of the social system, the failure of which overthrew the Republic. It is the most important one, for Paris was the cradle of the system and its battle-field. The extreme solution of the problem by the establishment of the *ateliers nationaux* has too signally failed for its renewal to be attempted; and the only way out of the difficulty seemed some compromise by which both antagonists, capital and labour, might gain, and the Imperial Government have the credit of the whole transaction.

The gregarious habits of the Celtic race, so conspicuous in their great capital, offered an opportunity for this compromise, and the great resources of the municipality the means for it. The impulse once given in this way, the imitative French nation could be easily enlisted to assist the Government in the work, and help, almost unconsciously, to carry out the ideas which it had once taken up arms to resist.

The city of Paris had a large surplus revenue every year; what was more legitimate than to apply it to works of public utility? Relieve the crowded town, open out thoroughfares, offer a profitable investment to private capital, set in motion every trade, repair and redeem bridges, construct quays, make the capital into the finest city in Europe; it was doing the public good, assisting capital, supplying labour, improving the habits

of the people, flattering national vanity, preventing the renewal of the sad conflicts between classes, and providing good lines of defence for possible emergencies.

To leave this work in the hands of the municipality would have been to leave free scope for narrow and interested ideas, and to open out the old struggle. It could be carried out only with a high hand by the Government and its agents. Individuals may complain, but the great majority will profit. Besides, it is the very principle of the Imperial Government to be the initiator of all measures; it alone can be the impartial and competent judge between conflicting interests, and has to maintain the balance between them.

There can here be no dispute about the principle—the right or wrong—for the French people have long sanctioned the interference of the Government in the private relations of the people for the general good; the whole reduces itself, therefore, to a question of measure and calculation.

The supporters of the Imperial Government point triumphantly to the success which has attended the efforts of the Government. The general and daily increasing prosperity of the city, those hundreds of new houses which private enterprise has constructed, the wellbeing of all classes in spite of the dearness, the undiminished resources of the city in spite of the heavy expenses, the labourer better fed than ever, are all facts which it would be difficult to deny. To any objections about so artificial a fostering of industry the reply is, that it is a natural development which in France requires the hand of the Government to impel and to guide; if one hints at a possible crisis through circumstances which cannot be controlled, the answer is that the harvest failed

in 1856 and that there was a monetary crisis in 1857, yet everything went on well. If one speaks of the future, of the great influx of labourers from all parts of France, attracted by the high wages, of the impossibility of going on thus for ever, of the consequences of a temporary interruption of the works, the answer will probably be less confident. Still people will try to prove that, in a large city like Paris, which is growingricher every day, there will be always a good deal of activity; that the impulse given by the Government has reacted already, and will still more react, on private enterprise and speculation; that it is impossible to say how far activity and prosperity can increase.

To a new problem like that tried in Paris and France, the old standard cannot be applied, and time alone can decide whether the calculations will prove right or wrong in the end. What has been already effected is so extraordinary that the future defies calculation. One fact will prove this better than anything else. Since the year 1851, the exports and imports of France have *doubled*. The means may have been artificial, but the result is as real as anything can be. If this hothouse system of production, as the adversaries, and manuring system, as the supporters, of the Government call it, has added so much to national wealth, who can say where it will stop?

In the mean time, volcano or not volcano, it is pleasant to lounge about it. This is the feeling of the Flâneur himself, and if one is to judge by countenances, it is likewise that of the busy crowd which jostles him. It may indicate carelessness of the future, but it looks very much like tolerable satisfaction with, and enjoyment of, the present, and it is pleasant to behold.

CHAPTER III.

LUTETIA PARISIORUM.

It would be a faithless desertion of an old friend to say so much about new Paris without taking a stroll about that dear quaint old mud city which has made so much noise in the world. It is rather at a discount just now with the sightseer, and the young and brilliant rival is daily more encroaching on its domain; but however presumptuously the intruder would jostle it aside, and however superciliously he looks down upon it, he has actually made but small progress, and the Old Town is still the heart and centre of Paris life, to which the Flâneur resorts, who wishes to participate in this life. After pacing up and down those large wide thoroughfares, a feeling of weariness comes over him. Those endless straight lines, those broad boulevards which seem empty in spite of the crowd, that general resemblance of houses and shops so well calculated to strike at first sight and impress with an idea of grandeur, all contribute to benumb every sense after a short time, and to produce a kind of half-conscious stupor equally unfavourable to receiving impressions or making observations. Almost without perceiving it, the Flâneur branches off into one of the side

streets, and a feeling of relief comes over him instantly. There he is again on true Paris ground, not the drab-coloured mud of the macadam or the adhesive surface of the asphalt, but on genuine slippery blackish-grey mud, which has merited for the city of the Parisians its name of Lutetia. The crowd is the same which elbowed him in the showy new thoroughfare, yet somehow or other it has become different in character. The difference reminds him of that between the French soldier on parade and in campaigning. The contact with the old Paris mud seems to have renewed the myth of Antæus. That crawling pace has given way to the true Parisian tripping swinging gait. Unlike the stolid crowd, fouling each other continually in the wider thoroughfare, every one pursues his way, daintily avoiding, by clever steerage and rapid tacking, the obstacles which he may meet with. A bright smiling expression animates every countenance instead of the former placid and insipid listlessness. The assumed constraint is dropped, and the true lively nature reappears again.

Let us then leave large new thoroughfares to sight-seers, and take a stroll through genuine old Paris mud. Where shall we go first? Nowhere in particular. This is our privilege as Flâneurs.

As we wander thus from street to street, from the north side of the water to the south side and back again, an exuberant flow of animal spirits is the first thing we become conscious of. It is the reflex of the life and movement which surround us. For miles and miles nothing but shops with greater or smaller pretensions; and a bustling crowd moving to and fro, rushing in and out,—the narrow streets can scarcely contain the double current of passengers. Is it a great market and

shopping day? No, it is the same every afternoon all the year round.

And wonderful, truly, is the animation of the whole town about that time, for it is not confined to one or more of the chief arteries of communication, or to one or another class of society, but a general mania of locomotion seems to have taken possession of the population, and seems to drive it about in every direction. That compact mass of promenaders which haunts the western portions of the old boulevards, from the Rue Vivienne to the Madeleine, and that never-ending string of carriages which turns down by the Rue Royale towards the Bois de Boulogne, are equalled, if not surpassed, by the Chiaja of Naples, or by Piccadilly, Bond and Regent Streets, on a fine summer's afternoon. It would be hopeless perhaps to single out one spot which could be compared to Cheapside, the Strand, or Oxford Street, at certain periods of the day; but for general intensity of life over the whole town, old Paris has no parallel. Highways and byways participate in it, as well as the higher and lower classes. Nor is that difference in the crowds so marked as in other towns; and although one stratum of society may be more prominent in one or another spot, it is never to the exclusion of others, and it would be difficult to find a place which is monopolised by one class of society. You may stroll about in the most remote quarters without attracting observation, and without feeling that loneliness and almost embarrassment which overcomes you if you attempt this in any other capital. It is this mixture of the whole population in Paris mud which gives such life to the crowd, and such character.

This mixture is explained by stopping at the corner of any of the cross streets which lead into the larger arteries, and looking at the houses and their inmates. The corner house, near which we are standing, is perhaps a demure-looking hôtel of a millionaire, shut out as much as possible from contact with the outer world; and its next neighbour, probably a narrow six-storeyed house, telling garrulously its own tale, with a grocer's shop occupying the ground floor, the first floor adorned with all the insignia of a tailor, the second informing the world where the best articles in "bonneterie" are to be found, the third floor, with its clean windows and pretentious curtains, probably harbouring the retired *bourgeois* and proprietor, the fourth looking dusty and dismal, and revealing the abode of some hard-working *ouvrier* in precious stones or metals, while higher up you may suspect the abode of the family of that workman in the blouse, or of the clerk in the dingy coat, who has just passed you. In vain do we search for those silent squares and rows of mansions which reveal in other capitals the choice quarter of the aristocracy: the most select spots of the Faubourgs St Germain and St Honoré have been defiled by the intrusion of shops and lodging-houses let in flats. Indeed, the inquisitive stranger who would seek in silence and in absence of shops an indication of the aristocratic quarter might make some strange mistakes, for after searching a long time he would most probably fix on the neighbourhood of Nôtre Dame de Lorette, which, although on the slope of the hill of Montmartre, can scarcely be said to be tenanted by those highest up in the social scale. If an inference were to be drawn from silence and absence of shops, it would have to be the very reverse of what

we have experienced in other capitals—namely, that such here denotes poverty and decline of the quarter.

These endless rows of shops are certainly one of the most astonishing features of Paris. Yet they existed even at the time when Frenchmen were scoffing at the "nation of shopkeepers." Not only is it quite an afternoon's business to find a street without a shop, but in most of the favourite places there are several in every house, and sometimes more than one even on a single flat. Who has not asked himself, Where do the people come from? how can they all live? Paris is probably the most populous town for its size in the world. There is little doubt that it was so until 1859, when it was extended to the fortifications. Its limits had remained until then as they were under Louis XVI. in 1789, when it had a population of about 600,000; while at the time of the annexation of the Banlieue, it reckoned not less than 1,174,346, or double that number. This vast number was crowded into 3402 hectares, or 6804 acres, giving 345 inhabitants to the hectare and 140 to the acre.* A child of habit and of truly gregarious disposition, the idea of escaping from this human hive never occurred to the true Parisian. He tried, if he could afford it, to have a country seat for the summer months in the vicinity of his dear city; but as to choosing there his dwelling permanently, and coming only to town for business, as so many Londoners do, he never dreamt of it. Even now that the limits of the city have been more than doubled, and that large thoroughfares, flanked by magnificent houses, have

* Even taking the new area of Paris, 7802 hectares, with 1,525,942 inhabitants, there are 195 to the hectare and about 80 to the acre, while London gives scarcely more than 32 to the acre.

been opened to the very outskirts, he subjects himself only in extreme cases to what he considers as a banishment. His chosen spot is near the most populous centres; he leaves them with a sigh when his means will no more allow him to pay the high rent. Although one of the great objects in the transformation of Paris was to put an end to this unwholesome crowding of human beings, it will take a long time before the tastes and habits of the people in this respect are reformed. While every new building rising in the centre of the town is taken as soon as it is finished, if not before, the squares and detached "hôtels," which have been erected to tempt people to migrate further out, remain unoccupied. There is something quite poetical in this fond attachment of the Parisian to his city, and to the life and animation which are peculiar to it. The fondness of the Swiss for their mountains, which has been so oft the theme of prose and verse, and which, by the by, exists now more in romance than in reality, was probably never stronger in its palmiest days. The true sound of the Parisian R, which is as characteristic in the language of Lutetia as the letter H in the precincts of Bow-bells, produces on the Parisian abroad the effect which the cowhorn is said to have on Swiss mountaineers in foreign parts. It makes him yearn more than ever after his dear Paris, out of which he only vegetates; and this attraction of Paris is not confined to the born Parisian; it soon extends its sway over the new-comer, and makes him often more fanatical than the native.

Such clinging to the old place, and crowding within such narrow limits, are in themselves sufficient to account for the unparalleled animation of the town, and for the

number of shops. A million and a half of people live closely packed together, who have to be provided with necessaries and luxuries, besides from 70,000 to 100,000 strangers, who arrive within the year to swell this number. But Paris provides not only for those within its walls. It is the greatest manufacturing centre in the empire; and, if value is taken into consideration, it produces considerably more than one-third of the whole industry of France. Parisian industry has a peculiar character: it does not, or at any rate it did not until lately, comprise large manufactures, but consists principally of industries which may be carried on most advantageously in small *ateliers*, employing each a few workmen. This subdivision of each branch of industry offers a far wider field for the exercise of the individual taste and skill of masters and workmen than can be the case in large factories, and probably accounts, in a great measure, for the noted superiority in finish, elegance, and taste which distinguishes Paris articles. These small *ateliers* are dispersed all over the town, and in most cases have their retail shops in the same building; and these shops provide a considerable portion of France, and of the civilised world, with articles of dress, jewellery, bronze-work, embroidery, shoes, hats, carriages, gloves, furniture, pianos,—in one word, all articles which derive their greatest value from the taste displayed in their construction. Already, in 1847, the value of these productions exceeded £2,400,000, and the new census taken last year will probably show an increase of at least one-third. The movement and shops of Paris represent thus likewise the stir caused by this production and exportation. Besides this, Paris is the

central depôt for the most notable portion of the import, export, and transit trade in France.

If to all this be added the lively sociable nature of the people, and a climate so favourable to out-door life, the unrivalled charm of the streets of Paris will be fully accounted for. Days and days may be passed in mingling with their life, absorbing it as it were, and still it will retain its novelty; nay, it will gain in interest, for while at first we are scarcely able to take in the *ensemble* of this life, by degrees we enter into its details: something like a person who comes into a glaring light of a sudden, and only by degrees accustoms his eye to distinguish the objects which surround him.

The first thing we see in this case is, that the framework which encloses this living picture of Paris is as attractive as the picture itself; and yet in vain do we search for those fine architectural monuments which adorn so many Italian towns, or those curious remains of the middle ages which lend such a charm to some German towns, like Nuremberg, for instance, or Prague; we perceive only scattered traces of them, faint and far between—a little turret at the angle of a street, or perhaps a carved window or door, so disguised that in most cases it escapes our notice. As for the rest, nothing but a succession of streets more or less narrow and crooked, enclosed on both sides by a succession of high houses, bare and without ornament, and having an average frontage of three or four windows—architectural paupers, with not even an attempt to disguise their destitution; and still for picturesqueness few places in the world can be compared to these narrow crooked streets.

What the proprietor and architect have neglected, the inmates of the houses have supplied, and each in his own way and according to his own taste; as each house harbours two and three shopkeepers, one above the other, and as the object of every one is to attract the notice of the passer-by and customer, all vie with each other in ornamenting and giving the greatest possible prominence to the portion occupied by them. The true orthodox beginning in this respect is to paint the walls in a colour different from those which surround them; then, if possible, some alterations are made in the windows, either by panelling around them or by disguising one of them, so as to obtain another point of difference from the neighbours. This basis being laid, the large signboard is affixed, redundant in colour and in caligraphy, and around or below or above it are placed such articles as may be best calculated to show the stock in trade. This good old habit is still faithfully adhered to in many places, and contributes not a little towards adorning the houses and rendering them picturesque. The effect of these individual efforts is greater than any ever achieved by the most original architect. The houses themselves seem animated, and to partake of the life which is going on in and around them; that mixture of colours and that variety of invention become an endless source of pleasure to the eye and of amusement to the mind.

Whoever wants to enjoy the full effect of this original style of ornamentation, let him take a stroll to the north side of the Halles Centrales, the great market-place of Paris. From the Church of St Eustache and the corner of the Rue Montmartre a row of old houses has been uncovered in the direction of the Rue

Rambuteau. Exposed to the public gaze, and brought almost into contact with the pretentious line of new buildings which have been erected on the east side of the market-place, the inmates of the old houses seem to have determined to take up the gauntlet thus thrown down, and to eclipse those huge masses by their gay and original style of ornamentation. Whoever has an eye for the picturesque will not hesitate to award the palm to them; and even the dullest passer-by will find his eye fascinated, while he will probably pass their more pretentious rivals almost without casting a glance in their direction.

But we have been wandering about so long in this picturesque maze that we begin to feel quite at home. The confusion gradually assumes shape; we single out the more prominent features of each locality, observe the recurrence of some and the absence of others, and thus are enabled to follow more closely the currents of this exuberant life, its rise and changes.

We are in the Cité, the island cradle of Paris, the favourite scene of sensation novelists of the romantic school, the traditional haunt of the outlaw, and the domain of the jail-bird, who shares the island with the Palais de Justice and Nôtre Dame, its archbishop and chapter: a strange neighbourhood to choose, but still convenient from its isolation and the intricacy of its streets. The novelists of the school of horrors will soon have to look out for other scenes, for imperial government seems decidedly averse to this kind of romance, and probably no other place has been so severely handled as this little spot. What with the enlargement of the Palais de Justice, the junction of the two sides of the Boulevard Sebastopol, and the clearance of the pre-

cincts of Nôtre Dame, little enough remains of the old place. Last autumn the block between the old Marché aux Fleurs and the Morgue was still standing, but doomed; you could pry into the Rue aux Fèves, the theatre of the exploits of Maître d'Ecole, Chourineur, Fleur de Marie, and other heroes and heroines of the 'Mystères de Paris;' and nowhere probably could a more appropriate scene have been found for such exploits. A dark labyrinth of lanes, passages, and alleys, without issues apparently, but all more or less connected, so as to form a human warren. Most of the lanes are altogether inaccessible to vehicles, and some so narrow, that by extending the arms the walls on both sides may be touched, and, in case of necessity, a leap taken from the windows of one into those of the other side of the lane. In spite of this proximity, the houses rise high up in the air, and cast a gloom and mystery on the whole place, such as fully harmonises with the idea of crime hiding itself. What is strange in the picture is the solidity of the houses. As far as darkness, faded colouring, and damp allow us to distinguish, they are built almost exclusively of cut stone, and here and there worn traces of stone ornaments are visible, all probably the remains of the times when the Cité was the residence of kings. Shops, which have intruded everywhere else, have not spared even this dismal quarter; not only wine-shops and eating-houses, wood and charcoal shops, but boot and clothing stores, even one or two *modistes* and a *coiffeur*, have had the courage to seek here for customers. Whatever life there is, is quite in harmony with the *entourage*. Silent figures slipping along in the dusk and disappearing in some narrow passage, here and there a woman standing

before the door and eyeing the stranger, or a head peeping out of the window at the sound of an unknown step. Not a trace of children or of household occupations, which are so prominent everywhere else among the dwellings of the poorer classes in Paris. There is material for a romance then and there.

The danger is, however, lest it should be all romance and no reality; for what with the air and light which have been let into the Cité by the late demolitions, what with gas-lamps and gendarmes, probably little more remains than the shell of the old horrors, and this shell has been filled with squalid unromantic misery. Men and women who have given up struggling in the mud of Babel, and have resigned themselves to sink in it, provincials, friendless and helpless, and any other misery which seeks a hiding-place.

A few steps, and we are out of gloom and silence, once more back among brisk life and noise. We are in the Rue de la Cité, one of the most important links between the two sides of the Seine. With the Faubourg St Jacques to the south, and the Marais to the north, it unites the greatest manufacturing centre with the chief quarter of the *ouvrier;* and perhaps no other place offers such an opportunity for seeing the latter: a walk over the Petit Pont brings us into the Faubourg St Jacques.

Although dispersed all over the town, the manufactures have a tendency to become localised. Thus, for instance, Paris articles, bronzes, metal-works, and jewellery, are concentrated about the Temple and in the Marais; carriage-building, saddlery, *modes,* and confectionery, group themselves on both sides of the old boulevard from the Madeleine to Montmartre. Right

and left from the Boulevard Montmartre to that of St Martin, is the chosen spot for tailors and shoemakers. The vicinity of the Halles Centrales serves for all stores of food, drugs, distilleries, &c.; the quarter between the Hôtel de Ville and the Rue de la Bastille, for cotton and silk manufactures; the Faubourg St Antoine for furniture, wood-carving, manufactures of machinery, chemical produce, &c.; St Jacques for leather, brushes, sugar-refineries, and so on.

The *ouvrier* endeavours as much as possible to adapt himself to this localisation, and those narrow high houses of old Paris greatly facilitate this process. Most of the uppermost storeys and attics all over the town are occupied by the labouring classes, above all, that portion of them which works at home, and which constitutes not less than one-fifth of the whole. But neither can all *ouvriers* find room round their *ateliers*, nor can all afford the furniture required; and the great mass of these have taken refuge on the south side of the Seine in the Faubourg St Jacques, and all around it towards the Observatoire and the Luxembourg.

There, on the slopes of Mount St Geneviève, the patron saint of Paris, the artisan and student dwell side by side, representing the vigour of mind and body not only of Paris, but, it might almost be said, of France. This was always the hotbed of those ideas which have changed the aspect of France more than once.

Close to the Seine is a small irregular place, surrounded by a maze of narrow intricate streets, and the only open spot in the neighbourhood before the municipality took to demolition. It is the Place Maubert, the Pnyx of the *ouvrier* of Paris, to which he has resorted ever since he played so prominent a part in the

history of his country. It has been respected, although all around the axe and hammer have gone mercilessly to work. It seems almost as if the object had been to cut off the feeders of this centre of hotheads, for by the Boulevard Sebastopol it has been isolated from the populous districts to the west, while the Boulevard St Germain cuts it off from those to the south. Still so strong is habit, and so powerful the sway of tradition, that last autumn, when the rise in the price of bread caused considerable excitement among the working classes, the Place Maubert was again resorted to as the arena where to vent the feeling of discontent. This circumstance will probably contribute to hasten the construction of the other thoroughfares, which are marked in this densely-populated neighbourhood. Already, by the demolition of the Rue de la Harpe and a portion of the Rue St Jacques, the *Quartier Latin* has been forced to migrate further west towards the Rue de Seine, while the *ouvrier* class itself has been considerably thinned, and pressed out towards the outer boulevards. But nevertheless enough remains for the study of the *ouvrier* at home for whoever is inclined to stroll about the Rue Calandre, the Rue de la Montagne St Geneviève, and others in the neighbourhood. The whole population seems to be living out of doors, and nothing can be more interesting than the scene presented by this quarter on a summer evening.

We cross the Boulevard Sebastopol and are in classic land, the heart of the *Quartier Latin*, another favourite spot of the romantic school, from Balzac to Murger, the home of the student, the artist, and the grisette, immortalised by Béranger, the land of songs and youthful lightheartedness. Science and art, and all

the occupations to which they give rise, or with which they are connected, are concentrated here. From the Luxembourg to the Seine, nothing but colleges, schools, *ateliers* of artists, printing establishments, lithographers, engravers, booksellers, curiosity-shops, manufactories of colours and brushes, *cafés*, and, above all, *hôtels-garnis*. The *Quartier Latin* is the real home of the "maison meublée." The streets swarm with them. They are recognised by a low wooden railing, painted in red, brown, or green, before the door, with *Hôtel Meublé* painted on it in yellow. Behind this railing is a dark passage, and a precipitous slippery staircase like Jacob's ladder. It leads to the *loge* of the *concièrge*, adorned with its brass candlesticks, and a regiment of keys, ranged according to their numbers. Another flight of stairs, and a landing paved with bricks, walls supposed to be painted white, and three or four doors painted yellow. If you enter one of the doors, you find four walls, a low bed, a table, a chest of drawers without locks, two arm-chairs in faded velvet, three chairs with horse-hair covering, an old-fashioned clock under a glass-case, and a Liliputian wash-hand basin.

But little does this matter; for indoors and outdoors there is more life centred in this district than in any others of Paris, and life too of a different character from any other. A great proportion of the inhabitants being youths in the prime of life, full of illusions, light-hearted, and naturally gay, they infuse a spirit into everything around them, which forms a charming contrast with the worn-looking and antiquated exterior of houses and streets. It is like a swarm of bees in the decayed trunk of a venerable old tree.

But we must not tarry, for we have yet far to go.

In returning towards the Seine we just stop for one instant to cast a glance into the four parallel streets of Grenelle, St Dominique, Lille, and de l'Université, which comprise the Faubourg St Germain, properly so called. We are not much tempted to lose time in them, for it is life we seek, and not the shells which contained it once. Claims and pretensions of a small number, however respectable in themselves, lose considerably in interest if there is no vitality and energy to substantiate them. Holding aloof and sulking are signs of impotence, and France is just now in a "go-ahead" mood. So France goes on and leaves the small cluster of Legitimists behind. So do we *flâneurs* with the Faubourg St Germain, its dull streets, wretched shops, and half-deserted hôtels, remarking only that the exterior faithfully represents the population which the quarter harbours.

As we have nothing to do with public buildings and ministries, with the Corps Legislatif or Legion of Honour, we do not stray to the Quay d'Orsay, around which a great portion of official Paris is clustered. Little great men and hosts of toiling clerks under different denominations, with larger or smaller salaries, and all more or less pompous, important, and narrow-minded, they are what bureaucrats are all over the world, as any one may convince himself who thinks it worth while to walk about the groups of public offices when office hours are over and employés go to their homes. These employés feel, perhaps, most keenly the changes which have come over Paris, for the increase in house-rents has driven a great number of them out of Paris to those charming little villages in the neighbourhood, easily accessible by rail or omnibus. They feel this as a hardship, although

many might think a few hours in the country rather a treat after dull long office hours.

While making this reflection, we have passed through the lively Rue du Bac, and, resisting the attraction of the best confectioner and pastry-cook in Paris, we cross by the Pont Royal, the Gardens of the Tuilleries, and the Rue de Rivoli, into the Rue St Honoré. The eastern portion of it, where we find ourselves, has fallen off since the new thoroughfares were opened. But the falling off is, perhaps, more apparent than real; for, with the old tenacity of the Paris *bourgeois*, many of the best traders have remained faithful to this, the Bond Street of old Paris. To the north of it is a curious cluster of streets, little known and visited, such as the Rue St Anne, Rue des Frondeurs, de l'Evèque and de la Michaudière. Surrounded and intersected though they are by some of the busiest shopping streets, such as the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs and the Rue Neuve St Augustin, they belong to another world; and the only connection kept up between them and those thoroughfares seems that they are occasionally used as short cuts between two of the busy points. The impression produced by them is that of respectable misery, something like poor relations near their rich friends. The streets are not more irregular, and scarcely narrower, than their neighbours, nor are their houses smaller or uglier, yet they have not prospered. They cannot afford the luxury of smooth Macadam, and must content themselves with the old pavement, full of holes, in spite of an occasional patching up. As if anxious to hide these defects, they avoid sweeping as much as possible. Instead of following the example of their more fortuuate neighbours, the shopkeepers seem more inclined to hide than to proclaim

their existence to the world." The houses themselves seem to press more closely against each other, as if to hide their nakedness and poverty. The whole reminds one of a threadbare coat in a brilliant company—of poverty which is ashamed of itself.

The effect is decidedly unpleasant, so we turn our steps eastward in the direction of the Halles Centrales. West, east, and south of them, towards the Seine, is, perhaps, the dirtiest and gloomiest quarter of the whole town, and yet it is one of the busiest. It is the great food store of Paris. Grain, flour, wines, beer, oils, liquors, fruit, salt, potted meats, &c., are heaped up in its dingy courts and magazines, a trade which occupies 50,000 persons, and may be valued at 300 millions of francs a-year. It seems almost incredible how it can be carried on in such a locality. Demolitions have cut it up, but could scarcely thin the traffic. As many parts are too narrow for the passage of two carts, there is a constant blocking up; no spot, therefore, is so calculated for studying vernacular French. There you see likewise the finest specimens of the working classes. Square-built and heavy as they are, they seem quite a different race from those who work in gloomy *ateliers*.

We are now in the heart of old Paris. As its centres may be taken the Halles Centrales and the Hôtel de Ville, and from these centres it spreads out, fanlike, towards the Boulevard, from the Place de la Bastille to the Boulevard Montmartre. Ever since Julius Cæsar extended the limits of the town beyond the island, its original site, this has been the real home of the Paris *bourgeois*, and so it is still, in spite of the prolongation of the Rue de Rivoli and the opening of the Boulevard Sebastopol which intersects it.

In this vast region is concentrated most of what remains of historical Paris, and most that constitutes the wealth and power of modern Paris. Every step is marked with the traces of the gradual growth of the "*bourgeoisie*," until it asserted its undisputed supremacy over all other social elements, and transformed the once fashionable Marais into the seat of Paris industry. Confined at first to the vicinity of the river and the neighbourhood of the Hôtel de Ville, the *bourgeois* town burst its limits to the north, and forced the aristocracy which had settled there to give way. This latter has wandered across the water to the Faubourg St Germain, and has spread to the west of the Tuileries; but its traces are visible from the Place Royale by the Rue St Catherine and Francs-Bourgeois towards the Rue Rambuteau. Where once Mademoiselle de Scuderi wrote down her gossip, and where the wits under Louis XIV. and XV. disported themselves, thrifty Paris *bourgeois* manufacture bronzes, perfumery, gloves, pianos, jewellery, and all the different articles for which Paris is justly famed. In these same hotels, where once money was squandered, now money is made; in the salons where bewigged dandies turned compliments, skilful hands now turn out tasteful bracelets or fans; and in the gardens where beauties lisped, steam-engines puff loudly.

Whatever is not available for *ateliers* and factories, is occupied by the workmen who are employed in the neighbourhood, and the by-streets and lanes which crowd about the larger thoroughfares are like so many dependencies of these latter. Many a little turret peeps out of some of these by-streets, and is inhabited by the modest *ouvrier* who works in one of the hotels close by;

and more than one Gothic doorway has been converted into a shop entrance. Past and present are brought into close contact, and form a contrast not easily to be met with elsewhere.

West of the Rue du Temple these traces of the past disappear; we are in full view of the nineteenth century, in the great clothing establishment which provides not only Paris, but sends its produce to all parts of the world, and imposes its fashions on the majority of civilised nations. Thirty thousand masters—tailors, boot and shoe makers, hatters, furriers, dress and linen makers—employing above a hundred and twenty thousand men and women, and doing business to the value of about three hundred millions of francs per annum. Four large arteries run across this quarter from south to north, and are continued across the inner boulevards. They are the Rue St Martin, St Denis, the Boulevard de Sebastopol, and the Rue Montmartre. It is around these that the great clothing industry of Paris has settled down. The south side of the inner boulevards has been long insufficient to contain its growth; it has crossed over to the north side, and now extends well-nigh to the outer boulevards, while its radii stretch west and east towards the Madeleine on one side, and towards the Temple on the other.

As for the western portion, nothing need be said of it, for it is the lounging and shopping place of the stranger, and may be said to be his quarter. It is far more so than he is perhaps aware of. Those splendid shops, if not for his exclusive benefit, are at any rate there chiefly to tempt him. The true Parisian has no shopping quarter; he has his purveyors all over the town, and some of the best in places where the stranger

would never dream of seeking them. The fact is, that, to the Parisian, shopping is real serious business—finding out the best article at the most moderate price, and he or she goes all over the town to discover the places renowned for some particular article. It is quite astonishing what a number of elegant equipages and fine ladies are thus met with in the most out-of-the-way places.

But if the stranger knows the western portion towards the Rue Castiglione and the Rue Royale, he knows probably very little about the eastern portion of the great trading quarter of Paris — the neighbourhood of the Temple. The precincts of the Temple preserved their privilege as an asylum and refuge for all those who were persecuted, long after Templars had disappeared. Under the shelter of this privilege a large floating population collected there—the weak to seek protection from the powerful, the guilty to hide himself from justice, the vagrant and vagabond, the adventurer, Jews and gypsies. It is long since gendarmes have ceased to respect asylums and refuges. Paris industry is no more afraid of the neighbourhood, and has nestled within the precincts of the Temple; but the place still retains a good deal of its old character, as a centre of the floating population of Paris—of strangers and provincials in quest of fortune, and of industries which cannot always be avowed.

To accommodate this floating population, the Temple, from time immemorial, has been the repository of old clothes and other articles laid aside by the inhabitants of Paris. Although the whole quarter is more or less like a rag-fair, the Marché du Temple and the Rotonde are the great centres of the trade. There have been consider-

able clearings round them, so as to form the Jardin du Temple, planted with trees, and laid out with grass plots and walks, and a large washing and bathing establishment has been erected; but the Rotonde still has its arcades, and the Marché its wooden booths. These two spots are more particularly devoted to the sale of old things, while their collection goes on in the dingy houses and courts situated in the by-streets. They are the resource of Paris in distress. Strange and diverse are the customers which they attract; but the Lorette and her "bonne" are the most frequent and prominent. Accustomed to the ups and downs of life, they feel none of that attachment to old things which induces the artisan and ouvrier to prefer the Mont de Pieté, where he has a chance of getting back the articles he has pawned.

It would be useless to follow the bourgeois across the inner boulevard to the Faubourgs Montmartre, St Denis, or St Martin, for in general features he is the same as on the south side of the boulevards, and we have no time to see him in detail. But we should miss an important feature of old Paris were we to omit crossing the Place de la Bastille into the Faubourg St Antoine, of famous memory in all the popular émeutes, which have succeeded each other since the destruction of the Bastille. With the exception of the old main street, the Rue du Faubourg St Antoine, this quarter looks as if it scarcely belonged to Paris. It has more the character of an unusually lively and industrious country town. The houses have diminished in height and increased in width. Instead of being like so many caravanserais harbouring inmates from all parts, and with all kinds of occupations, most of them are devoted to one kind of industry, and apparently inhabited by one or per-

haps two families, with now and then a lodger in a spare room. Intermixed with these small houses are seen from time to time large enclosures, with blocks of building and high chimneys, the unmistakable evidence of manufacturing on a large scale. Through this external shell we can already discern the life of the Faubourg St Antoine. It is divided between the largest manufactures and the industries which are carried on in small ateliers, where master and workman still keep up more or less the relations which existed before guilds were abolished.

The large manufactures are chiefly devoted to machinery, or materials connected with building. The small industries are cabinetmaking, upholstery, lamps, bronzes, wood-carving, gilding, &c., all industries which require space, and admit of little subdivision of labour. The skilled labour and exercise of the inventive powers which these industries demand, produce a more intelligent class of mechanics than other trades, where the subdivision of labour has reduced most of the workmen to mere machines. If we remember, besides, that the large manufactories have an element of intelligence not to be despised in their foremen and mechanics, and of muscular strength and energy in their workmen, it will be easy to understand why the social and political theories of the last thirty years found so fertile a soil and so powerful a support in this same faubourg. The municipality has done its best to cut up this dangerous ground, and already several large thoroughfares have been opened, while others are projected, which will subdivide the whole quarter into small isolated blocks of buildings, and thus make any combined resistance difficult, if not impossible.

We are at the end of our stroll. We could do no more than cast a hasty glance at the different centres of Paris life, which daily and hourly interchange their currents. But even this hasty glance sufficed to show that, however cut up those centres may have been by the recent demolitions, as yet the currents have been only slightly diverted, while the sources have been little affected. This can only be the effect of years. The commencement is, however, made. Air, light, space, and cleanliness are beginning to be appreciated. They are as yet dear luxuries; but perhaps on that very account they are every day more in request, and ideas, tastes, and habits are being gradually modified. Another ten years such as those which have passed, and a stroll through old Paris may be like an antiquarian research, a ramble among ruins.

CHAPTER IV.

GARRISON AND CAMP.

CONSTANTINOPLE enjoys the official title of *Mahrusé* which means the "well-guarded." Many people may, think that this title might be claimed with more justice by Paris. Nor, perhaps, would they be wrong. The many broad thoroughfares lately opened are so many military lines for acting with large bodies of troops and cannon. They enable these troops to maintain sure communication between each other, and to isolate the number of small "quartiers" into which the town has been broken up by these arteries. A number of barracks, and other strongly-built and detached public edifices, are dispersed all over the town, forming so many points for concentrating the military force in defensive positions. The fortifications round the town, above all, the forts outside, are in first-rate order, and have been increased; lastly, a corps d'armée, of three divisions, called the Army of Paris, is kept up "en permanence," besides the Garde Impériale, a complete corps d'armée in itself, of foot, horse, and artillery.

And yet nothing can be farther from truth than the usual notion that it is impossible to take one step about the town without meeting two soldiers. Indeed,

the reverse is the case. The soldier, except on festive occasions, when he forms an indispensable part of the pageantry, is as great a rarity in Paris as he is in London; and he who should come to this place with the idea of seeing something of French soldiers, and of the French army, would find himself greatly deceived. He might hunt out barracks and public buildings in order to study the sentries at the doors; he might go to the Gardens of the Luxembourg, and see recruits going through the manual and platoon exercise, under the eyes of a smart young sergeant, who tries to amuse the lookers-on at the expense of the dozen uncomfortable-looking individuals before him. If he lives in the Rue de Rivoli, every morning at eleven he would see pass before his windows a few detachments of some regiment of the Garde, led by a magnificent tambour-major, making wonderful exercises with his cane; or he may occasionally be attracted by the martial sounds of a military band, and feast his eyes with the sight of a weak battalion of young soldiers belonging to some line regiment, sauntering along with a shocking disregard to time and measure. This is all the chance he has of seeing a martial display, unless, indeed, he enjoys and appreciates National Guards.

The only branch of military organisation which he can study here with advantage is military music. If he go diligently in the afternoon to the Garden of the Tuileries, to the Place Vendôme, to the Luxembourg, or to the Palais Royal, he may form a tolerably correct estimate of the power of lungs, of the comparative efficiency of ophicleides and saxaphones, and of the more or less sentimental, martial, or dancing disposition of the band-masters of most regiments of

the Garde Impériale, and of the corps d'armée of Paris.

It almost looks as if it were by premeditation that this most attractive feature of the terrible god of war is by preference shown to the public. There is no necessity, however, for suspecting such cunning devices; for the truth is, that, what with the number of detached forts outside, the number of men required for public buildings, barracks, &c., and a population of $1\frac{1}{2}$ millions, 50,000 soldiers cannot make much show. Moreover, of this number several thousand must be subtracted for Versailles, St Cloud, Fontainebleau, Compiégne, each of which requires several battalions, or sometimes several regiments. But even of the corps d'armée of Paris itself, only what is absolutely necessary for service is kept in the town; and most of the cavalry and artillery, for which there is little want, for which there is not much accommodation, and still less forage, are dispersed in the neighbourhood of Paris; so that the barracks in town are at times only half filled, or even empty. This is very different from what existed in other times, and shows that the situation in this, as in many other respects, has been wonderfully changed by ten years of Imperialism. The imposing military spectacles, at one time so frequent, have also fallen off lamentably. Formerly, during a short trip to Paris, a review was calculated upon as one of the lions sure to be met with; now long stays may be made without the good fortune of falling in with this almost extinct leonine species. Unless some soldier playing Continental prince or sovereign happens to grace the Tuileries with his presence, there is little hope of seeing such an exhibition. Now that these impressive and brilliant arguments in favour of Imperialism can

be dispensed with, it has been found out here, perhaps, more than anywhere else, that reviews are "bores" for every one, soldier, officer, and reviewer, and form one of the greatest miseries of military life. They represent, for all but novices, a great deal of extra work, extra trouble, and extra ennui.

Paris in 1862 is simply the most agreeable garrison in France, and hence the most cherished dream of every regiment in the service. It includes extra pay for officer and soldier, the permission for the former to go about in mufti, the distractions of the capital, abundance of peaceful conquests, brilliant cafés—all pleasure and little work. As such a promised land Paris appears to those who have not been there. But it is not always regretted as a lost paradise by those who have left it. Most of the officers and men find out very soon that there are tempters and forbidden fruits in plenty in this paradise. Extra pay is insufficient for extra expenses. The sweets of small garrisons have been exchanged for the tantalising sight of pleasures beyond reach; there is rather more work than elsewhere; and the uniform is less made of in Paris than in any other garrison town; so, one by one, all the pleasant illusions disappear; and many are rather glad than otherwise when the time comes for leaving the paradise. For married officers, above all, it becomes quite a hardship, residence there absorbing all they may have formerly saved, and sometimes more; so that the unpleasant consequences of a Paris garrison leave their traces in the regiment for years.

With the regiments of the Garde Impériale it is different, for everything in their establishment is calculated for a stay in the capital: they are far better paid; they have, like English regiments, their mess; they have good

quarters; the pleasantest posts, and only those; they are petted especially when they are on service during the Emperor's stay in one of the country residences; the officers are invited to dinner and to shoot; in one word, they enjoy privileges which do not fail to excite some jealousy in the mass of the army. The feeling of equality, that great shibboleth of the Frenchman, is hurt by the distinction which "ces Messieurs" enjoy. And yet nothing can be fairer than to distinguish a corps composed exclusively of picked men, furnished by all regiments. According to the regulations, a soldier must have served at least two years to be admissible; but in reality the great majority of the men are old soldiers who have served their time and re-enlisted. There is scarcely a man among them without the medal for the Italian war; more than one-half exhibit the Crimean medal, and a great proportion the *medaille militaire*, or some other distinction.

The establishment of the Garde Impériale has been ridiculed as the revival of defunct traditions. It may be a revival, but it is the revival of great traditions, based on never-changing human nature, and especially adapted to the genius of the country. As such it has a deeper meaning, and must be looked upon as one of the means for producing a complete revolution in the French military system, and for transforming a popular into an Imperial army.

The political movement from 1815-1848 exerted its influence on the army as on everything else in France. Although, perhaps, more disposed than any other class to isolate itself from the rest of the population, and nourish an exclusive feeling of caste, the French army could not resist the stream which carried away the nation.

Above all, after 1830, the current notions of citizen kings and citizen soldiers penetrated within the sacred precincts of discipline, and destroyed, by degrees, the barriers which separated the army from the people. The wars in Algeria counteracted in some measure the influence of these ideas, but they were on too small a scale to destroy it. Politics were the stepping-stone to greatness; officers became politicians, and had their opinions, which were taken from the 'Journal des Debats,' the 'Presse,' or the 'National,' as the case might be. As for the soldier, he began to look upon his calling less as a profession than as a sacrifice which he, the citizen, must make to his country; and he waited with impatience for the moment when it should cease, and when he would be allowed to return to his home and calling. Only a few of the most adventurous youths, attracted by the romance of the wild life in Algeria, and having a taste for razzias, re-enlisted in the Zouaves. The result of this transformation was seen in February 1848. The popular army joined the popular cause.

The circumstances attending this event were, however, so humiliating for the army that they at once roused the dormant class feeling, and from this moment a reaction set in, especially among the officers. It was so sudden that, if there had been a resolute man among the members of the fallen dynasty, he might have turned the tide of revolution. All the long-suppressed animosity against the scribblers and talkers who had ruled the destinies of France for the last eighteen years, burst out in its utmost violence, and desired ardently an opportunity for revenge. The occasion soon presented itself; and in the Days of June the army took

its revenge on one portion of those who had humiliated it in February. Scribblers and talkers fell into the background, and generals became masters of the situation. Cavaignac, Lamoricière, Bedeau, Changarnier, Charras —these were the names which eclipsed all others. The representatives of military politics took the frightened bourgeois by the hand, and led him on the path of reaction to the 2d of December, which ended the game for bourgeois and generals. These latter had become, in their turn, cunning politicians and talkers; and while they came forward on this new battle-field, a bold man of action stepped in, and carried the military reaction which they had begun to its natural conclusion.

The work was done; the army had recovered more than it had lost; and it was cured of those confused political notions with which it had been infected. There were, indeed, traces of these remaining, but discipline and military spirit had reasserted their sway. The problem now was to strengthen the revived class feeling, and secure it for him who had contributed so much towards its revival.

The seven years of service fixed by the conscription were scarcely sufficient to wean the soldier from home associations; especially as, except in times of war, several of these years were spent on furlough. To increase the time of compulsory service was out of the question; so means had to be found to make the service attractive, and raise thus a taste for professional soldiering.

These means were found in the revival of the Imperial Guard, and in the *Dotation de l'armée*, two contemporaneous measures which complete each other.

It is difficult to say which of the two feelings is the most predominant in Frenchmen—the rage for distinc-

tions, decorations, and uniforms, or the fury for equality. Probably the former, as the older of the two, and the latter is only a reaction against it. The first is, at any rate, the earliest which is instilled into the Frenchman; he learns it in his school days, where medals and uniforms constitute an essential part of the system. Hand in hand with this weakness, goes an inordinate passion for ruling and exercising authority; the smaller the sphere the more absorbing is this passion, which animates the last Garde Champêtre as well as the Minister.

The beginning of Imperialism was more than usually favourable to the growth of these tendencies in the soldier, but as civil government again reasserted its sway, it was found that one sou per day clear, no windfalls, and no prospect for the future, were considerations to which the strongest natural tendencies must yield; and already the next year, 1853, the voluntary engagements and re-engagements, which were considerable in 1851 and 1852, fell off lamentably, leaving little hope for the formation of a reliable military class. The pressure of the Crimean war became an additional motive for planning a reform of the whole system. It was the first war on a large scale since the Empire; and, in spite of the goodwill and natural capability of the French soldier, it showed the drawbacks of a military system based almost entirely on conscription: young soldiers, weak in body, were found even in the best case but poor substitutes for trained troops, in the strength of manhood.

On the 25th of April 1855, therefore, a law appeared which modified considerably the position of the soldier, and which is tending to alter completely the character of the French army.

According to the law of 1832, which regulates the conscription up to this day, the annual contingent is furnished by all young men having completed their twentieth year. The repartition of the contingent on the different departments and cantons is proportionate to the numbers inscribed on the lists. All those who are inscribed draw lots; but the law establishes exemptions, and these are replaced by the following numbers until the contingent is complete. Exempt by law are those who have not the standard height of 1 mètre 55 centimètres, those incapacitated by infirmities, the oldest of orphans, the only son or eldest son of a widow or of a blind father of seventy years of age, the eldest of two brothers who are both liable to serve in the same year, all who have a brother already in active service, unless as a substitute, and those whose brother may have died or been incapacitated in the service.

Besides these cases exempt by the law, every one was allowed to find a substitute at his own expense. This system had great inconveniences for the families as well as for the army. The *remplacement* became a trade of the worst description, in which all kind of devices were practised to defraud the families; there was fraudulent substitution of names, or the substitute deserted, or was found incapacitated for military service, and the family, which was responsible to the State, had to pay the fine several times over. On the other hand, this system brought into the army a number of scamps who were difficult to manage, and exercised a pernicious influence on their comrades. This was so generally the case, that a substitute was almost always looked upon as a suspicious character.

The law of 1855 abolishes substitution altogether,

and substitutes exemption. Every one who is called to serve can secure exemption by paying the sum fixed by Government, and the family is relieved from all responsibility. The money is paid into the Caisse de la Dotation de l'Armée, which takes upon itself to supply the corresponding number of men by voluntary enlistment and re-enlistment of old soldiers. Soldiers actually in service can likewise get discharged by paying the sum fixed by the Government for each remaining year they would still have to serve. The sum fixed for exemption from the whole seven years of service, which was 1500 francs, is, since 1859, 2000 francs,* and 200 francs, formerly 150, for each year, or fraction of a year, which the soldier has still to complete. The bounty for enlistment is likewise 2000 francs, formerly 1500, but for re-enlistments of less than seven years, 280 francs for each year—150 before. These sums are paid, one half at the time of enlistment, and the other half when the time is completed; for the latter half the soldiers receive an annuity representing the interest of the sum due to them. In order to favour still more the re-enlistment of old soldiers and non-commissioned officers, they receive additional pay (*hautes payes*), increasing from 10 to 50 centimes a-day, after the second and third re-engagements. To this must be added, that the time of service which entitles to a pension has been reduced from twenty-five to twenty years; that every year of campaigning, or garrison in Algeria, reckons for two years' service; and that the *medaille militaire*, founded in 1852, for soldiers and non-commissioned officers and sergeants, gives an annuity of 100 francs.

* It has been raised a few weeks ago to 2500 francs for the seven years, and 250 francs for each year which the soldier has still to complete.

To these advantages is the prospect of being received into the Garde Impériale. This must be considered as a kind of advancement, securing a privileged position, good quarters, comfortable service, a distinctive uniform, and more than double pay — all so many points of attraction.

For the generality of workmen, artisans, and labourers, who feel a vocation for military service, the army now offers the means of retiring between thirty-five and forty years of age, with a competency sufficient to live upon. Voluntary enlistments are accepted at eighteen, so that a man can have finished three terms of service before he is forty; but there have been wars for four years lately, besides the certainty of passing several years in Algeria, so that every term must be reduced at least by one, if not two years. At thirty-six, then, the man may have his capital of 6000 francs, besides his pension. It would be almost a wonder if he were not made a sergeant in the end; and if his conduct has been good, he may likewise get the *medaille militaire*, so that altogether it is reckoned he may have his 700 to 800 francs a-year. Still in the prime of manhood, if not incapacitated, he has the chance of a post in the gendarmerie, or some other employment, where steady and reliable men are wanted. Of course, he may likewise spend his bounty, but still the possibility of doing so well is a great attraction.

Numbers will prove this best. According to the report of the Caisse after the close of 1859, the voluntary enlistments since its establishment amounted to 62,398, and of re-enlistments to no less than 81,212; of these latter 51,850 re-enlisted for seven, and the rest for less than seven years. As for the enlistments,

no doubt the wars contributed to swell the number; but in the re-enlistments there is a steady progress, which would be still greater were it not for the temptations which the two last years on furlough offer. In these last years, nevertheless, an average of one-fourth of those discharged may be reckoned to have re-enlisted.

It need scarcely be remarked how much this tends to alter the French army, which loses every year more its character of a conscript army, to become one of volunteers and professional soldiers. The army is, of course, too large to rely exclusively on voluntary enlistment for maintaining it; but the strong mixture of this element contributes not a little to raise its value in the field, and its reliability at home as a pillar of the Imperial Government. The difference already appeared in the war in Italy as compared with that in the Crimea, and will every day make itself more felt.

There is a curious circumstance which tends to facilitate this process; and this is, that since the new law was introduced the number of those who redeemed themselves from military service has incredibly increased. Formerly, where there were so many drawbacks, and such difficulties for the families in finding substitutes, and in escaping all the trickeries practised, comparatively few availed themselves of the permission. Only the rich could afford to run the chance of paying twice. But now that, after the payment of the comparatively small sum of 2000 francs, all responsibility ceases, every year the proportion becomes greater. From 16 per cent in 1856 and 1857 it rose to 18 in 1858, and to 27½ per cent in 1859; or out of the 140,000 men who were called out in that year, not less than

38,325 were exonerated. In single departments the proportion was far greater than the general proportion; in some as many as 48 per cent, or almost one-half, paid. In Corsica the proportion was smallest; it amounted but to 4 per cent.

Immense as this change is, it is not all the work that has been done in the last ten years for the formation of an Imperial army. Dress, armament, drill, material, have all been reformed and improved. Modern inventions applied to warfare, and the experience of past campaigns, would have been in themselves sufficient to suggest great changes; but there was another consideration in this case, which hastened the process. To form an Imperial army, it was important to efface as much as possible all that could recall the old African army, nourished and fostered with so much care by the Orleanist dynasty. When the latter rose to power, it found itself in a more difficult position than the Imperial Government in 1852; for it was not through, but in spite of, the army that it ascended the throne. In one respect, however, the task of the Orleanists was easier, for they had no traditions to efface. Those of the first Empire had been carefully weeded by the Restoration, and the Restoration itself had supplied none in their place. As in politics, in military matters likewise, the Restoration mistook the spirit of the age; and, carried away by its predilections for the time before 1789, it tried to create an army of mercenaries, officered as much as possible by members of the aristocracy. Popular indignation, which broke out in 1830 against the whole political system, turned with double violence against this anti-national military system, and assisted the new dynasty

in its endeavours to reconstitute the army on altogether new principles. The ground was cleared, and the building commenced at its very foundation. The system of conscription was again introduced; dress, drill, armament, discipline, regulations, were all successively changed, and in eighteen years, or wellnigh three generations of soldiers, favoured by a three months' campaign every spring in Africa, an entirely new army had arisen. There had been no great and brilliant wars and victories; but those continual campaigns were for conquest, and received an additional interest from the peculiarity of the country in which they were carried on. They led to the establishment of special corps, influenced the manner of fighting, marching, camping; in one word, gave the army an individual character more strongly marked and more lasting than short wars on the largest scale could have conferred. Absinthe, coffee, palm-trees, swift Arabs in bournouses, razzias, Zouaves, Chasseurs d'Afrique, &c., paltry as they seem singly, formed a strong chain of traditions in the life of the French soldier.

No changes external or internal in organisation can efface the power of such traditions; they can only be dimmed by fresher and more brilliant ones. Imperialism has not been slow in supplying these plentifully: long-coated Russians, tight-trousered Austrians, frightful Chinese, not to speak of English allies and Turks; Stambul, Milan, Pekin, Sebastopol, Alma, Inkerman, Tchernaya, Magenta, Solferino, Crimean winters, passages of the Alps, and Italian summers, Savoy and Nice. No wonder if Arabs and Kabyles begin to look small; if Isly and Constantine are forgotten; if African bivouacs have lost their interest and Algeria its charms.

Moreover, the spring campaigns having gone out of fashion, Algeria sinks down to an uncomfortable garrison, which has only this advantage left, that the time passed there is reckoned as a campaign—that is, each year as equivalent to two years' service. There is a talk of depriving it of this last glory, and then little will remain of African *souvenirs* beyond absinthe, coffee, and the newly-introduced Zouave trousers of the infantry.

The result of all this is a new army, as different in outward appearance, material, and spirit, from the army before 1848, as this latter was from that of the Restoration. It is an imperial army. All the springs of human action have been set in motion: interest, class feeling, glorious traditions, *esprit de corps*, and habit, have all been appealed to to attract it to the dynasty. Human nature is full of riddles, above all, the French species of it; yet, unless we are prepared to admit that all the known laws of human nature will be upset just at the critical moment, or else that there is in Frenchmen an innate aversion to dynastic feelings, which overcomes every other instinct, we have every reason to suppose that the army can be depended upon under all circumstances.

But, dynastic or not dynastic, the army is a magnificent legacy which Imperialism will leave to France. It has cost much, but the French cannot complain that they have not their money's worth. There may be other armies superior in one or another peculiar quality; but, taking it all in all, there is no military organisation in which the existing material has been turned to so good an account. It is this which makes the French army what it is, and not some innate disposition for soldiering, as is usually supposed.

In spite of exemptions, and voluntary enlistments and re-enlistments, there are annually from 60,000 to 70,000 young Frenchmen called upon to march on the road to glory, most of whom would prefer following the plough, or sitting quietly in their workshops, engaged in the useful arts of peace. The light-hearted youth of the towns, whose delight it was, in his gamin days, to admire the gilt cane of the tambour-major, and keep step with every marching body of soldiers, accepts his lot with tolerable equanimity; not so the conscript from the country, whose whole existence has until then been centred within the narrow sphere of his village. Those who know conscription only by name, have no idea of the tears, heartburnings, and misery which the system causes every year to many thousand families. There is the preliminary wretchedness of suspense when the time for drawing lots approaches; then there are the six months' delay which intervene between the drawing of the *bad* number and the joining of the depôt. The author of the 'Derniers Jours d'un Condamné' might write a scarcely less distressing diary of these six months. The silent resignation to inevitable fate often gives way at the last moment to a fit of temporary and impotent rage, which ends at the departure in an outbreak of false gaiety produced by a reaction of vanity. The first days in barracks are days of despondency and prostration, under the sway of which the recruit still is when he is taught the first arduous steps in the path of glory. The time seems scarcely well chosen, for if we behold at drill a couple of these terrified wretches, red in the face and sweating, looking in their ill-fitting clothes and strained attitude like puppets dressed up and every

moment in danger of falling, we cannot persuade ourselves that they will ever bear the faintest resemblance to that smart wiry little fellow, in full possession of all his muscles, and set off by his well-fitting uniform, who bullies them to his heart's content; and yet, probably not more than two years ago, that tyrannising, self-contented individual was looking as uncouth and unhappy as number one or number two, on whom he practises now; and certainly no one would recognise, six months after, our two miserable conscripts in the two *troupiers* sauntering along the Garden of the Tuileries with conquering airs, and eyeing the *bonnes* with smiling looks.

This rapid metamorphosis is the finest result of the *esprit de corps* which animates the French army. There may be a more jealous feeling of *esprit de corps* in the single English regiments. Austrian officers may carry the idea of comradeship to greater refinement; but nowhere does *esprit de corps* pervade and unite all grades and ranks of the military hierarchy as it does here. *Soldat Français* is a title of which a Maréchal de France is proud. The action of this agent in the transformation of the recruit into a soldier is powerfully assisted by what might be called a free-masonry of "chaff," which is a peculiar gift of the French soldier. The French soldier never sulks; he revenges himself on his superior by a joke or a song. Volumes of time-honoured jokes and books of songs could be collected, which swell every day, and are applicable to almost any circumstance. Joke and ridicule are the arms against the superior, and they are likewise the sharp tools which shape the conscript into a soldier. The process resembles somewhat that which is in vogue

at an English public-school with good traditions, the difference being, of course, that the tone with armed men must be slightly altered. It is a good-natured chaff which stings and rouses, but rarely wounds. This system of tutoring contributes not a little to impart to the French soldier that elasticity of spirits which serves him so well to face the ennuis and hardships of a campaign.

In general the French soldier is not seen to greatest advantage in garrison or on parade; it is in the field alone that he can be appreciated. There is something depressing and uncongenial to his expansive nature in garrison life. It is no doubt due to the comparative isolation in which he lives, and which produces some of the bad features of monastic life. Compared with other armies, the French officers and soldiers have little contact with the other classes of society—they live in their own little world. The best sides of our human nature are rarely developed within such narrow limits, for they require freedom and space. That continual brooding over the paltry details of his garrison and regimental existence brings out into relief the little weaknesses of every one, and breeds that narrow-mindedness and morbid susceptibility with which the military in France are so often reproached. Campaigning breaks this narrow circle; it opens out to him a wide horizon, and brings him into contact with the world. No wonder that the French soldier looks upon it as upon a holiday which liberates him from his prison, and gives full scope to that lively nature of his which has been compressed. A new spirit seems to take possession of him: that nonchalant, almost slovenly, gait which is visible at parade, gives way to an animated light step, which

enables him to accomplish with comparative facility forced marches. He has been fitted out and prepared for this contingency; everything superfluous—tunic, shako, &c.—has been left behind. Even on parade he is never expected to carry his burden in a stiff unnatural manner, which must break down in long marches; and the latitude allowed to him in this respect teaches him the easiest way of carrying what is necessary. The idea, early instilled, that he must consider himself as independent of all means of transport, is a stimulus of exertion instead of depression; it becomes a source of emulation and rivalry, and to be a good campaigner is a question of *amour propre* not less than of comfort. The *tente d'abri* and the mess system have their share in this; but here too the chief agent is *esprit de corps*, which stigmatises the helpless, desponding, and slovenly. The closer contact and almost familiar intercourse between the subaltern officer and soldier in camp, checks in a great measure the overbearing dispositions of non-commissioned officers, which is not uncommon in barracks, and never allows the idea to grow up that the soldier is abandoned, badly cared for, and uselessly harassed. Common danger and common sufferings become a means of union instead of isolation, as is often the case in armies where there is less harmony. It may be a sign of individual weakness and of want of self-reliance, but the result of it is a more intimate comradeship, and consequently strength. No ill-temper and unsocial disposition can long resist where every one is good-natured and accommodating, and where any pretension to singularity is punished by ridicule. All bragging, quarrelling, and boasting soon disappear, and a light-hearted *bonhommie* succeeds, which largely

aids in bearing the fatigues and privations of a campaign. This happy change reacts for some time after the campaign, and the beneficial influence of the two last wars is still felt. They have polished away the rust of garrison life, and cured in a great measure that morbid susceptibility which formerly distinguished the French officer.

But, whether in camp or garrison, the French soldier has one imaginary enemy who disturbs his peace of mind, and with whom he is constantly at war. It is the Intendance, his providence. The most violent invectives and the most stinging satire are reserved against this hard-toiling body of functionaries. And yet how little do they deserve them! It is their care in peace which contributes so much to metamorphose the weakly recruit into a square-shouldered muscular little soldier; and their organisation and efficiency in times of war have been often an object of admiration and envy to other armies. But such is human nature. Were it not for this imaginary enemy, the French soldier, taken all in all, might certainly be looked upon as the happiest of his class all over the world.

CHAPTER V.

TERRESTRIAL PROVIDENCE AND ITS DRAWBACKS.

With the exception, perhaps, of the Celestial Empire, there is no country richer in proverbial wisdom than "le beau pays de France." The conclusion drawn from this exuberance might either be that Frenchmen act so wisely as to have found out by experience infallible rules of action in all the varied circumstances of life, or else that they act so foolishly as to require constant words of warning and advice. Were I to judge by one of the greatest favourites among these proverbs, I should certainly incline towards the latter conclusion, and set down French proverbs as rules written down to show how Frenchmen do not act.

"Aides-toi et Dieu t'aidera" seems indeed a charming satire, where every one hopes and trusts in Government initiative, Government employ, Government patronage, Government encouragement, Government subvention, and Government monopoly.

The rivers are periodically flooding their banks; swamps and marshes wait to be reclaimed; railways are to be constructed; roads are wanted; ports require improvements; agriculture demands draining, irrigation, and a better breed of animals; storms, hail, and drought

injure crops; fire consumes buildings; boats and nets are lost in fishing; manufactures and commerce are suffering from a crisis; the people have neither work nor bread: and the Government is expected to remedy all these evils and shortcomings, besides thousands of others. It is to act the part of universal Providence, charged to help, to encourage, and to do the work of everybody—an impersonation of the god Vishnu, with numberless eyes, hands, and feet—or a revival of Figaro, the renowned barber of Seville. There seems a charm in its very name which is promise and encouragement.

It is so strange that this Oriental notion of the attributes and functions of Government should have taken strong root in the minds of those who claim the leadership in the civilisation of the West, that we may well ask the old question, Whether it is the Government which fashions the ideas and character of the people, or whether the Government is merely a reflex of the nature of the people?

There has been a succession of Governments in France, bearing the most different names and titles, but all of them animated by the same jealousy against individual freedom, and equally bent on centralising and meddling with everything. It is easy to understand that such a system of tutelage, long continued, has contributed to weaken individual energy, and to efface by degrees, in the minds of the people, the line of demarcation between individual exertion and Government interference. But either this line of demarcation must have been originally rather faint, or the individual energy weak, and consequently the idea of a tangible Providence on earth very attractive; for in all the violent changes within the last eighty years, we

never see the slightest trace of a reaction of individual feeling against this system of tutelage.

The rage is *not* against the pretension of the Government to act the part of Providence, but against the manner in which it has discharged this duty—against the favouritism which it showed for one class of the population, and the injustice which it committed towards another. Those who think that they have not their due share in the boons of terrestrial Providence, rise in arms to assert their claims. It is always "Jérome Paturôt in search of the best of Providences"—one which should be even-handed, and find the means of satisfying everybody.

The task is not easy, and all those who have tried their hands at it successively have failed. Good-natured paternal kings of the old school, assemblies of the Tiers Etât, national conventions of the people, consuls and emperors by the power of the sword, aristocratic kings by the grace of God, modest bourgeois kings by the will of the people, constitutional doctrinaires, philanthropic poets full of enthusiasm, democrats, socialists, communists, stern republican soldiers, king logs and king storks —and all in vain. Too much in one direction, or too little in the other:—no one has found the true equilibrium.

The last ten years have witnessed another effort to realise this ideal of a Government so long sought after by Frenchmen. It is on an unprecedented scale, and very different in its nature from any efforts made before. There is no blind feeling about, or wild rushing after, theories and plausible illusions. There is no shirking the task, or shrinking from consequences. It was from the beginning a premeditated and avowed determina-

tion to undertake the task of French Providence, and make Frenchmen happy in spite of themselves.

There is a curious and little-known document extant which will be the astonishment of future generations, and an invaluable source of information for the historian of Imperialism. It is the 'Bulletin des Lois,' the list of laws and decrees made within the last ten years. Each year forms several large volumes, and adds hundreds of decrees and laws. The mass is so astonishing, that one scarcely knows whether to shudder at the work which was thought necessary to make Frenchmen happy, or to admire the fertility and zeal displayed in carrying out the colossal task. The united fertility of all the legislatures in Europe, taken together, has not been so productive in the last ten years, and how far more have they remained behind as to quality! Those little mendings and patchings of theirs seem wellnigh ridiculous by the side of such radical reorganisation. Great as the metamorphosis has been in Paris, it gives but a faint idea of the demolitions and rebuildings which have taken place in the remodelling of France. There are plenty of streets and quarters in Paris where axe and hammer have not yet penetrated, but there is no side of social existence which has been left untouched by these laws and decrees. Government, administration, system of education, arts, sciences, means of communication, army, navy, agriculture, industry, commerce, colonies, have all been more or less radically reformed, to make them fit into the new system of happiness devised for France. No régime ever watched with such anxious care the humour and disposition of this fantastic race, so easily tired. It forced upon them new ideas, showed them new pur-

suits, excited new or revived old feelings, and thus kept them in a continual state of excitement, leaving them time neither for ennui nor for reflection. Nay, it even finds time to give a considerable share of its attention to the affairs of private individuals, and of the smallest communities, endeavouring thus to extend its sphere into the smallest details of everyday life. A kind of Rodolphe of the 'Mystères de Paris,' on a grand scale, only recognised and authorised, but nevertheless not altogether despising mystery and disguises.

He who should look upon all this as a mere application of absolute government in its extreme form, would have but a one-sided idea of the system. The political part is by no means the most prominent, the foundation of it being the solution of the social and economical problems which have agitated France for the last thirty years. The dreams of Phalansteriens and Icarians have been reduced into a practical shape, and the principle of association applied in a new way and on an immense scale. "The interests of the individual are identical with the interests of the community" is the general axiom, and the collision between the two arises only from misconception of this axiom; hence a superior power is necessary to direct and guide individual efforts, to assign his place to every one, to encourage and help the weak, and to restrain the strong. All waste of labour and energy will thus be avoided, the total production greatly increased, and the share of each individual considerably augmented.

Whatever may be the opinion about the truth or fallacy of the theory, it would be difficult to deny that it has done wonders for France. It has placed the country on an eminence which it never before occu-

pied, and has procured for the mass of the population an amount of wellbeing such as they never before possessed. Indeed, so patent is this fact, that the question is only whether too much has not been done, and that too much too hastily. To act the part of Providence on earth is an expensive pastime; and in this case the funds must come from those for whose satisfaction they are to be employed. The fears which were entertained in this respect, and the sinister predictions which were made, seem to have found an official confirmation by the late disclosures in financial matters, and the changes made in consequence.

In a social and politico-economical problem like that tried here, arithmetic was necessarily of the highest importance. The State undertook to lay out a part of the social capital as an investment for the common good. All depended on keeping the balance between this outlay and the productive power of the country.

A retrospective view in this respect offered great temptation. From 1830 to 1847 a steady progress is visible, leaving little doubts about a regular development of the productive powers. With the exception of four years,—1831, the year after the Revolution of July; 1841, that of the Eastern complication; 1847, that of the great financial and commercial crisis; and 1848, that of another revolution—all epochs when the normal state of the country was disturbed,—the ordinary revenues show a yearly increase of from 20 to 30 million francs, while the external commercial movement shows a corresponding augmentation of wellnigh 100 million francs a-year. But even the epochs of crisis seem an advantage rather than otherwise,

for immediately after, the development becomes more rapid; and all this takes place at a time when production is hampered by narrow-minded legislation, by imperfect means of communication, by old sluggish business habits, and a proverbial timidity of enterprise.

The field of activity offered for a government with unlimited powers seemed almost boundless. Another crisis, more violent than any before, had just passed, and no one was left to thwart or to retard the Government: it could sweep away all obstacles—heal, help, and stimulate national production.

There was, nevertheless, one feature in the financial tables since 1830 which was calculated to lead to reflection, and to counsel prudence. In spite of the constant increase of the ordinary revenues of the State, there are during the whole period only six years which close with a nominal surplus; while all the others, up to 1851 inclusive, show a more or less considerable deficit. From 1840 downwards the deficit has become the rule, which shows not a single exception. But even in the years when there seems a surplus revenue, it is owing to extraordinary resources arising from loans, increase of the floating debt, and other similar expedients. There is not a single year during the whole period in which the expenditure does not surpass the ordinary resources, so that at the end of eighteen years the Government of July left a charge of 42 millions of Rentes more than its predecessor, besides a floating debt of nearly 500 millions of francs.

The second Republic could not but follow the example—it issues 54 millions of Rentes more, representing loans, consolidation of the floating debt, purchase of the railway from Paris to Lyons, and

colonial indemnities; but as it suspends the action of the amortissement and annuls the Rentes belonging to this fund, the active Rentes are in the end rather diminished; yet, in spite of the consolidation in 1848, the floating debt rises again to 614 millions.

This perverse tendency of the expenditure not only to keep pace with the increase of the ordinary revenue, but even to surpass it, seems, however, to have made little impression before the wonderful elasticity, which not only the revenues of the State, but likewise the national production, showed in the very first year of the Empire. The former, which, through the crisis of 1848, had sunk from 1351½ millions to 1207 in 1848, and had only reached 1273 in 1851, rise at once to 1336 millions, or almost to the sum of the most productive year before the Revolution, showing in one year an increase of 63 millions. Next year they reach the sum of 1391 millions, another increase of almost 60 millions, and higher by 40 millions than any year before.

On the other hand, the amount of foreign trade, which had reached its maximum in 1851—namely, 2787 millions—attained in 1852 3120 millions, or an increase of 333 millions in one year.

This astonishing result, which appeared almost before anything could be done to remove obstacles and give fresh impulse to activity, was of a nature to justify the boldest calculations. A few years of deficit seemed of little consequence when the resources increased at such a rate, especially if a large portion of the deficit was owing to outlays on works of public utility, which could be considered as a more or less profitable outlay.

Indeed, unless we assume some such blind and un-

limited faith in the elasticity of the resources of the country, the financial administration becomes totally unintelligible. Nothing can give a better idea of this strength of faith than a comparison between the estimated budgets, as submitted to the Corps Legislatif, and their definitive settlement :—

Estimates.					Definitive Account.				
	Revenue, Ordinary and Extraordinary. Millions.	Expenditure. Millions.		Millions.		Revenue, Ordinary and Extraordinary. Millions.	Expenditure. Millions.		Millions.
1852.	1450	1503	—	53	1852.	1487	1513	—	26
1853.	1451	1485	—	34	1853.	1524	1547	—	23
1854.	1520	1516½	+	3½	1854.	1802	1988	—	186
1855.	1566	1560	+	6	1855.	2793	2399	+	394
1856.	1601½	1598	+	3½	1856.	2307½	2195½	+	112
1857.	1709	1698	+	11	1857.	1911½	1872½	+	39
1858.	1737	1717	+	20	1858.	1890	1859	+	31*

The years 1854, 1855, and 1856 were extraordinary years of a great and long war, the expenses of which were not included in the estimates, so that the difference between these and the definitive settlement may be up to a certain point explained; but there are four ordinary years which are far more startling in their way. To appreciate them fully, a look at another table of figures is indispensable. This is the table of Ordinary Revenues, representing the resources drawn every year from the country by taxation. It is as follows :—

1852. 1336 millions, in round numbers		
1853. 1391	„	„
1854. 1417½	„	„
1855. 1536	„	„
1856. 1637	„	„
1857. 1683	„	„
1858. 1748	„	„

} in all, 10,728,500,000 francs.

If we compare this sum with that of the expenses

* For more ample information, see the 'Statistique de la France comparée avec les autres Etâts de l'Europe,' par Maurice Block. Paris, 1860.

actually paid, 13,374 millions, the difference between the two is 2,625,500,000 francs. The accounts of 1859 are not yet definitively made up, but including the reserves of the Fond d'amortissement, the ordinary revenues will probably have yielded about 1830½ millions, while the expenditure is calculated to amount to 2257 millions, leaving a deficit of 426½ millions, which, with the rest, makes 3052 millions, or £122,080,000 sterling, in eight years.

The first idea which suggests itself is of course to seek the cause of the deficit in the two great wars. For each of these special resources were voted by the Legislature, for the first, three loans — one of 250 millions (March 1854), the second of 500 millions (December 1854), and the third of 750 millions (July 1855); and for the second war a loan of 500 millions (May 1859). The loans of the first war yielded in all 1,535,100,000 francs, and that of the second 524 millions, together 2,059,100,000 francs, leaving thus about 1000 millions of the deficit still to be accounted for. But there is no doubt that the loans contracted for war purposes not only covered the expenditure incurred, but left a considerable sum for other purposes, and were the cause of the nominal surplus which figures in the definitive accounts of the budgets from 1854 to 1859.

Monsieur Fould in his report estimates the expenses of the Crimean war at 1348 millions, which gives a sum for other purposes of 187 millions.

And the traces of this surplus are equally found in the general Budget. The 394 millions of surplus in 1855 represent the remaining portion of the loan of 750 millions. By their assistance, 1856 leaves a surplus of 112 millions. This surplus is assigned to 1857,

a year of complete peace, in which they dwindle down to 39 millions; this sum goes again to 1858, diminishes to 31 millions, and disappears in 1859. In the extraordinary budget of public works of 1860 there are 31 millions distinctly mentioned as remains of the loan of 1859, showing that something remained likewise from the Italian war.

Taking all these signs together, it is not too much to assume that the war loans left at the least 200 millions clear, not reckoning the indemnity of 60 millions from Sardinia, which is destined to pay a portion of the great works projected for 1860, 1861, and 1862. But these 200 millions which remained from the war loans are not the only extraordinary resource which has been used up. There are first the reserve of the Fond d'amortissement. From 1852 to 1859 756 millions of this reserve figure among the receipts of the ordinary budgets. Then come 100 millions owing to the consolidation of the Bank capital, 135 millions due to the consolidation of the Caisse de la Dotation de l'Armée, 130 millions so-called obligations trentenaires, destined for the completion of railways—in all, 1321 millions of what might be called extraordinary resources. To this must be added the floating debt, which in December 1859 was 921 millions, 307 millions more than in the beginning of 1852. Another item which must be specified is the Rentes issued for other than war purposes: 4,403,000 issued to facilitate the conversion of the 5 per cent into 4½ (1852), which necessitated an outlay of 74 millions; and 1,000,000 for the Palais d'Industrie, Legion of Honour, &c., and representing some 100 millions more of extraordinary financial resources. Lastly come the sums paid back by the railway

companies for advances made by the State. In the last years these show a sum of 1,300,000, but were much larger in former years; still even at this rate it would be 13 millions more for the eight years—together, 1741 millions; and if we add the indemnity from Sardinia, the total of extraordinary resources applied to the exigencies of the ordinary budget amounted already at the end of 1859 almost to the same sum as the real expenditure for the Crimean and Italian wars.

There is as yet no possibility of estimating the accounts for 1860 and 1861; but there are several circumstances which made these years more expensive and less productive than those before them. First, the new commercial tariff, from which a loss of 90 millions was expected for 1860. It was, up to a certain point, diminished, but not compensated, by an augmentation of the Excise on liquors, and in the price of tobacco. On the other hand, the annexation of Nice and Savoy, the Chinese war, the expeditions to Syria, Cochin-China, and Mexico, and the increase of the garrisons at Rome, formed extraordinary expenses. The report to the Senate, on the 2d of December, estimates the deficit of the two years at 300 millions; but this scarcely includes the extra outlays on account of the dearness of provisions and stagnation of trade, and goes only down to December last, so that from 400 to 500 million francs will be much nearer to reality.

The accounts of extraordinary resources used up in ten years of Imperialism, give thus the following result:—

Cost of Crimean and Italian wars,	1859 millions.	
Extraordinary resources and "passiva,"	2160 „	in 1861.
	4019 millions.	

Of these 2,059,100,000 are covered by war loans.
74,000,000 (for conversion of the 5 per cents) by Rentes.
25,000,000 (for Palais d'Industrie, &c.) by Rentes.
Up to 1861. 835,000,000 by Fond d'amortissement.
60,000,000 by indemnity from Italy.
100,000,000 by Bank capital.
135,000,000 by Caisse de la Dotation de l'Armée.
130,000,000 by obligations trentenaires.

3,418,100,000 covered out of 4019 millions.

Or 611 millions of "passiva," which, added to 743 millions representing the "passiva" of the Treasury in 1852, makes 1354 millions floating debt and arrears still to be paid.

This total, however respectable in itself as a specimen of ten years' financial administration, is less embarrassing to the Government than might be thought. The Treasury is merely a kind of general cashier and banker for communes and public and private establishments, which are under its guarantee; they deposit their money, receive a certain amount of interest, and have an account-current.

Thus, on the 1st January 1861, the floating debt was 811 millions. Out of these :—

241 millions from communes and public establishments.
5 „ belonging to army and navy.
62 „ account-current of the Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations.
35 „ from the Bank of France, but exigible at the rate of 5 millions a-year.
65 „ advances of Receveurs Généraux.
13 „ Caisse de la Dotation de l'Armée.
25 „ Bills of the "directeur comptable" of the Caisse Centrale.
154 „ of Saving Banks.
54 „ Credit foncier.
74 „ Different Accounts.

728 millions.

So that there were only 74 millions in Treasury bonds. These latter have probably been largely increased last

year, and may cause a momentary embarrassment, but the whole sum of "passiva" is not very formidable, if we consider the regular increase of revenues and trade. If we take the most productive year before the establishment of the Empire (1846), and compare it with 1858, the last year the accounts of which are settled, we find an increase in revenue from 1351 to 1748 millions, or almost 29 per cent. But the revenue had fallen off considerably, and was only 1273 millions in 1851; so that the real increase was almost 35 per cent. The trade returns, again, which show the highest sum in 1851—namely, 2787 millions—reached, in 1859, the last year before the new tariff came into operation, 4904 millions, or an increase of 35 per cent.

It may not be superfluous to remark, that the increase in the revenue is in a great measure owing to the increase of national wealth, and only in very few cases to increase of taxation. Thus the direct taxes, which are voted *en bloc* every year, have increased since 1851 by 50 millions only, and this increase is almost exclusively on the portion affected to special purposes in the departments. It is in the indirect taxes that the great augmentation takes place. Comparing the last year before the new tariff with the most productive year before 1852, they show an increase from 827 millions to 1059 millions, or 232 millions difference. There was an extra tax on spirits and wines introduced during the war, and an additional tax on beetroot sugar in 1852; but the produce of these accounts for scarcely more than one-tenth of the total increase. In 1860, the Customs reform necessitated some changes, and in consequence the price of tobacco was raised by 25 per cent, and the tax on spirits and alcohol by 25 francs the hectolitre. Thus it may be

safely said, that nine-tenths of the increase in the revenue is owing to the development of national prosperity.

It is not the past expenditure and actual deficit which are alarming. The danger lies in the financial system, or rather want of system, which has hitherto prevailed. It can be best characterised by saying, that the right hand did not know what the left hand gave. As there is no solidarity among the Ministers, there can be, properly speaking, no question of a regular Budget. Each Minister makes his report direct to the Emperor, trying naturally to show the increasing wants of his department, the Minister of Finance like the rest. These conflicting demands are brought into some sort of shape, and submitted to the Conseil d'Etat, so as to be presentable to the Corps Legislatif, but this was hitherto the least important part of the business, and the influential Ministers, above all, reserved their powers for the struggle which began after the Budget had safely passed.

The Senatus Consultum of the 25th December 1852, gave, namely, to the Emperor the power to order and authorise, by simple decree, all works of public utility and enterprises of general interest, and to assign extraordinary credits for this purpose. The same decree gives, likewise, the power to transfer the credits voted for one department to the necessities of the other. It was to avoid supplementary credits that the Senate conferred this power, and limited, likewise, the extraordinary credits to works which were directly undertaken by the State. But this power was too elastic, and offered too many temptations, not to be soon abused and applied to all departments and all purposes.

Immediately after the voting of the Budget, the race began between the Ministers to get the largest shares

in these credits. Every one had one or more pet projects which he submitted to the Emperor. When the consent of the latter was obtained, it was, as a matter of form, presented to the gentlemen in the Conseil d'Etat, and it became quite a triumph to surprise less fortunate colleagues in the ministry by the appearance of the decree in the 'Moniteur.' No one wanted to be worse off than his neighbour, and the surprises became every day more numerous. As experience showed the convenience of improving a Minister's department in this way, the taste for extraordinary and supplementary credits daily increased. Above all, since the Crimean war, these credits, which, until then, oscillated between tens of millions, began to move among the hundreds of millions. It seems almost as if the large credits required during the war had familiarised people with large figures.

The last two years may serve as a specimen. In the Bulletin des Lois for 1860 there are 36 supplementary credits, amounting to 46,171,568 ; 46 extraordinary credits, 191,154,817, besides 15 transfers = 11,000,000 ; in all 248,000,000 in round numbers, in a budget fixed at 1,824,000,000. In 1861 there are 47 supplementary credits = 34,823,967, and 51 extraordinary credits = 238,306,762. Then there are extraordinary exceptional credits for six Ministers = 45,000,000, and special credits for public works of 10,941,997—in all, 329,172,726 francs, in a budget estimated at 1930 millions. It is true that sometimes one or another of these credits is again annulled, but these cases are comparatively rare ; and M. Fould, himself admits in his report that 115 millions were used in 1860, and 200 millions in 1861, which sums, however, do not include those required on account of the dearness of provisions. Such easy play with

millions must have defeated all attempts at regular budgets, and it was high time to renounce such a pernicious practice. It seems that after what has been done in "works of public utility and enterprises of general interest," the exceptional power of supplementary and extraordinary credits may be given up without restriction, especially if the power of transferring the credits of one department to the wants of the other is kept up. In a large budget like that of France, this power is sufficient for any emergency which might arise between the meetings of the Corps Legislatif.

CHAPTER VI.

TERRESTRIAL PROVIDENCE AND ITS ADVANTAGES.

HAVING set forth the "petites misères," to which those who undertake the part of Providence on earth are subject like other common mortals, it is only fair to cast a glance on the sunny side of the pictures, and enumerate some of the sweets which are reserved for those who are bold and powerful enough to aspire so high.

Nothing is probably more calculated to make us so conscious of our power as an occasion to exert it for the relief of misery, or for conferring happiness in individual cases. It is, as it were, trenching more directly on the province of Providence. The means for such occasions have been amply provided in the second Empire by an increase of the civil list from 12 to 25 millions of francs. A bourgeois king, walking about with his umbrella, was compelled by his position to be stingy; and any attempt on his part to deviate from this line would have been regarded with suspicion, and set down as corruption, although his large private fortune might have been sufficient to excuse any little deviation from this constitutional maxim. In the present case the obligation lies in the opposite direction. Nor can there be any charge of remissness in the performance of it; as the numerous visits and journeys to the different parts of

France can testify. East and West, North and South, Algeria, and even the lately annexed provinces of Nice and Savoy, have all had their share in the private bounties of the Empire. But, more than any other, those places where the Emperor or Empress has made a more or less prolonged stay—such as Biarritz, Plombières, and their vicinities—have enjoyed this advantage. The Imperial privy purse is always open to all cases of calamity and distress, and is appealed to by departments, towns, villages, and individuals. The Rhone overflows its banks, an accident befalls a mine, a storm has ravaged the coasts: Imperial liberality is always the first to mitigate the misfortune. Besides this, at every moment the 'Moniteur' informs the world of some grant, now for a school, now for a church, promenade, or some charitable institution, or as a reward for some case of devotion, or as support to a distressed or bereaved family. The wonder is how so much can be done with so little.

After punishing enemies, rewarding friends is one of the sweetest privileges of Imperial omnipotence. Among the friends, the Senate and the Corps Legislatif stand out foremost. Times are changed from what they were when Government was looked upon as the natural enemy of the people, and when "Pairs" and deputies were set up to act the part of fierce watch-dogs. It is true means were even then found to tame them by throwing before them morsels on the sly; but it could not be allowed that he should feed them against whom they were set up. Now it is the Elect of the people who rules and governs, and senators and deputies have become friends, assisting instead of opposing Government. They cost about 7 millions of francs a-year.

Another set of friends, far more sure and reliable, deserved to be remembered, and these were the employés—that faithful phalanx which, free from political prejudices, toiled along the narrow beaten path of routine, and had served with equal devotion the different governments which had succeeded each other in France. A great deal could and required to be done in this respect. The complicated system of centralisation, which has been prevalent in French administration, necessitated a great number of employés; while the jealousy with which this host of devoted agents of the Government was looked upon, since 1814, allowed little to be done for the amelioration of their position. The prices of all necessaries of life had largely increased the rate of all other labour, and while wages had adapted themselves everywhere to this increase, the employé of the Government alone had been forgotten. To improve his condition was almost an act of justice, or, at any rate, of charity, while it was likewise a measure of policy.

All the ministries show strong traces of this work. The Ministry of Justice, which figured in 1846 with 23,000,000, receives now 28,000,000; the surplus is explained by the conversion of the fees into regular higher salaries, and by the increase of the salaries of the Justices of Peace and of the Greffiers.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs shows an increase of 2,000,000 above the ordinary years before the Empire. This increase also is owing to an increase of salaries. The Ministry of the Interior shows 1,305,000 in 1859, against 900,000 in 1846, for Central administration, and 10,000,000 for Departmental administration, against 8,000,000 in 1846: the Ministère des Cultes 46,000,000 against 39,000,000 in 1847. In the Ministry

of Public Instruction the increase must have been even greater; but it is so mixed up with the changes introduced in this department, that it would be difficult to ascertain how much of the surplus of 6,000,000, which this department shows since 1844, is due to this cause: but judging from single instances, a general increase of 20 per cent in the salaries is rather below the average. This is more or less the case with the other ministries, that of Colonies included. The Ministry of Finance alone shows a peculiarity which is decidedly a great improvement. The salaries have been raised in an even greater proportion; but the number of employés having been diminished by 550, the total expenses of administration have been reduced by 2,000,000. This was done by simplifying the financial organisation, and by seeking safety from fraud in a smaller number of better paid employés, rather than by trusting to a larger number of ill-paid functionaries.

A government which was the impersonation of the Parisian bourgeois of the old school, had to affect a cynical disregard of appearances: not so a government personifying the majesty of the people and popular sovereignty. The Prime Minister of the former, the man of all work, was no longer dignified enough for the occasion; and he was replaced in 1852 by the Minister of State and of the Imperial household. He is the visible representative of the Emperor, the organ of communication with Ministers, Senate, and Corps Legislatif. All the brilliant parts of public service—such as public buildings and monuments, archives of the Empire, museums, fine arts, theatres, fêtes, the direction of the 'Moniteur,' and the Conseil d'Etat—have been united to adorn him. The bourgeois government could

never get more than from 4 to 5 millions for all the splendour. The Ministry of State began with 8 millions of ordinary expenses, which, owing to national fêtes at the occasion of the Crimean victories and other solemnities, rose, in 1854-58, to 15 and 13 millions, until they seem to have settled down at 10 millions a-year. But these represent merely ordinary expenses, and do not comprise the large works which this ministry has accomplished since its erection. The credits allowed for these works from 1852 to 1860 inclusive, amount to rather more than 70 millions of francs, and they were applied to construct the magnificent range of buildings which unite the Louvre to the Tuileries, and to the building of a portion of the Palais de l'Industrie. After the completion of the works, the credits had diminished from 23 millions in 1854 to 1,500,000 francs in 1860; but they will probably figure again high, as last year a large portion of the Tuileries has been pulled down to be rebuilt. Indeed, the Bulletin des Lois for 1861 assigns 9 millions of supplementary and extraordinary credits to this department.

This expensive splendour, which would have caused indignation among a more sober and calculating people, was here a well-devised means of gratifying a national propensity, while it was at the same time one of the means of employing a large number of workmen. To turn to account a national weakness, and make it co-operate in the solution of the great social question, was a measure which showed an intimate knowledge of the people. This weakness had no occasion to manifest itself under a government in which the masses were taken no account of; but it seems so naturally inherent, that even the calculating bourgeois, who seemed

formerly to despise all these appearances, now forgets the cost while beholding the splendour.

Another of these weaknesses which had been long neglected has likewise found ample satisfaction during the Empire. It is national pride. Louis Philippe, by his narrow-minded and reactionary policy abroad, had done perhaps more to undermine his throne than by the analogous system he pursued at home. France, accustomed so long to the lead in Continental politics, found herself in the wake of others, and ended by despising the Government which had so far humiliated her. Those angry debates about the policy of the Government in the Sunderbund question, have only received their true interpretation by the days of February, and by the enthusiasm which has hailed every step of the Imperial Government in the opposite direction. In this respect, the feeling is as unanimous as it can be in a country. France has vindicated her true position in the world, and never grudges the cost.

The discussions raised this year about the reductions of the army, showed no trace of any dissatisfaction with the expenditure incurred for carrying on the two great wars. They had merely reference to the military establishment in normal years of peace. And even in this respect the suggestions never went farther than to diminish the cost without impairing the efficiency; that is, to keep the "cadres" intact, and send a larger proportion of the men on furlough. A few statistical data will place this question on its true merits.

Up to 1853, the beginning of the Eastern war, the annual contingent taken by conscription was fixed at 80,000 men. The necessities of the war led to an increase of not less than 60,000, making in all 140,000—

a number which was retained till 1855 inclusive. In 1856 it was reduced to 100,000, which has become, it seems, the standard for normal years, such as 1857, 1860, and 1861. In anticipation of the war in Italy alone, the contingent was exceptionally raised in 1858 to 140,000, and kept up at that number in 1859.

Leaving out the exceptional year of 1848, when the institution of the Garde Mobile and other circumstances increased the effective force of the army to 400,000, the yearly contingent of 80,000 men gives an effective force of from 330,000 to 370,000 men in the years from 1846 to 1853. The exceptional contingents of 140,000 raise it to 550,000 or 570,000 men, while the present contingent of 100,000 gives an effective of from 390,000 to 460,000, or from 30,000 to 90,000 men more than before 1848. The Budgets for 1860 and 1861 estimate the effective force at 392,400 men. The Government has considerable latitude in raising or diminishing its amount. Although the contingent is voted by the Corps Legislatif as a maximum, an Imperial decree settles the proportion which is actually called out. In ordinary years seldom more than one-half of the contingent is ordered to join, the rest forming the reserve, liable to be called out should it be required. This, combined with the system of furloughs, makes it possible to have a war establishment ready, without overburdening the budget too much. Thus, for instance, the report of the recruitment on the 1st of January 1858 gives an effective of 538,952 men; while the financial account of 1857 shows 415,200 as the average of the year.

In spite of the improvement in the soldiers' condition, and the great changes in arms, accoutrements, and material, the cost in ordinary years is proportion-

ately less than what it was before the Empire. The improvement in the soldiers' condition is mainly owing to the new system of exemption, and to the Caisse de la Dotation de l'Armée, of which I have spoken in another place; while most of the changes in arms and material were effected during the wars, and figure in those budgets. Thus in 1859, when the rifled guns were introduced, the material of artillery cost 23 millions instead of 7½ millions in 1858, and the remounts 44 millions (6 millions in 1858).

One million of francs for each 1000 men is about the average cost before 1848. The Budget of 1847 gives 349½ millions as the cost of the army; but from this sum 16 millions must be deducted for civil government and other expenses in Algeria, which now figure in the Budget of the Colonies; so that 333 millions remain as the cost of 337,000 men, which was the effective during the year. The Budget of 1858 shows an expenditure of 377 millions for an average effective of 415,000 men; and even these 377 millions include 11 millions of arrears of former years, so that properly only 366 millions apply to the year itself, showing an increase of 33 millions above 1847.

Thus, at an expense of from 30 to 40 millions of francs a-year more, France has the satisfaction of knowing that she is able to go to war almost at a moment's notice. Whether this satisfaction is in itself worth anything, it is for Frenchmen to decide; but if efficiency is compared with the increase of cost, they cannot complain of not having their money's worth.

The financial report lately presented to the legislative bodies announces a notable reduction in the effective of the army. The average, which was 476,000 men on the 1st January 1861, has been reduced to 446,000 in 1862,

and is to be farther diminished to 400,000 men. From what was said above about the elasticity of the furlough system, and the latitude the Government has in calling out whatever proportion it deems fit of the contingent, it will be clear that this economy can be effected without impairing the efficiency. The cadres are kept intact; and a larger number of men are sent on temporary furlough, or a smaller number of the contingent are called out. But they must be ready to join at a moment's notice. The only permanent diminution is in three regiments which have been dissolved, namely, the 1st regiment of the foreign legion, and the 102d and 103d Savoyard regiments, which were almost entirely taken over from the Italian army when Nice and Savoy were annexed.

In the navy this comparison between efficiency and cost, since the beginning of Imperialism, is still more satisfactory. There is a strange perversity in human nature which makes us undervalue, in a great measure, whatever we possess, and aim at things which experience has shown to be either altogether beyond our reach, or in which we have at any rate little chance of ever attaining excellence. This morbid tendency bears a good deal of analogy to the fantastic predilection of cats for birds and fish, both of them so rarely within their reach, and is probably the mainspring of the passion of the French for being a naval nation and a naval power. This weakness is not of yesterday, and, in spite of many failures, is stronger now than ever. It would be a mistake to seek hidden aims and secret objects in this yearning; it is a mania like any other—for instance, that of sailors for going on horseback.

The Restoration, and the Government of July during

its first ten years, had other things to do than to encourage manias; and the French navy, under the pressure for economy, sank down to comparative insignificance. The first Eastern complication in 1840 produced a reaction, by showing how France had remained behind other nations in this respect, and how she would be still more distanced if she did not make an extraordinary effort at a moment when the application of steam-power was daily more tending to transform the naval system of former days. The old weakness, assisted by the satisfaction of having a new colony in Algeria, overpowered economical considerations. The dynasty which saw, in a transformation of the navy, another means of strengthening its position, lent a willing hand to the satisfaction of this weakness. With the view of identifying the army and Algerian conquest with the dynasty, the Duc d'Orleans, and later the Duc d'Aumale, had been sent to Africa; and the Prince de Joinville received the task of doing the same service to his family in the navy. It is the dynasty of July, and not Imperialism, which has the credit of having led the French into this path. Imperialism has only continued the work, and, it must be admitted, successfully.

There were powerful considerations which urged it in this direction. The Prince de Joinville was far more successful with the navy than his brothers had been with the army; and it is a matter of history, that in no class of the population was the Orleanist feeling stronger and more lasting, than in the navy and the maritime populations. To destroy this feeling, the work of creating a new navy had to be continued and surpassed. The advances made in nautical affairs, and

the two great wars, gave the welcome opportunity for attaining this object.

However successful the Prince de Joinville may have been in instilling dynastic feelings into the navy, he can scarcely be said to have been equally happy in his efforts at creating an efficient one. He worked during a time of doubt and transition, when even the best authorities were at variance about the general introduction of steam as motive power. The screw-propeller, which settled the question as regards men-of-war, had scarcely been invented; and everything was as doubtful as it has been lately about iron-clad ships. Yet the experiments were costly enough.

Before 1840 the Budget of the marine department varied between 60 and 70 millions of francs. After that year till 1847 it varies between 116 and 134 millions of ordinary expenditure, so that the total amounts to 966 millions. Besides this, from 3 to 19 millions a-year were spent for extraordinary works on the naval harbours of Brest, Cherbourg, Toulon, &c., giving a total of 42 millions; in all, above a milliard of francs for eight years. The first year of the Republic kept up this scale; nay, in order to give work to those who were clamouring for it, it had even to increase the expenditure for extraordinary works to 21 millions of francs. In the years between 1848 and the beginning of the Crimean war, both ordinary and extraordinary expenditure diminishes by wellnigh 30 millions a-year; so that, with all the cost of preparation for the impending war in 1853, they scarcely reach the lowest figure between 1840 and 1848.

The Crimean war changed matters. It settled one disputed question and raised another. It left no doubt

about the inferiority and comparative uselessness of sailing vessels, and witnessed the first successful trial of an ironclad ship. The lesson was not lost; and already, in 1857, a large project was devised by which the French navy is to be completely transformed in fourteen years —from 1858-1872. The project comprises three points, 1*st*, To form a "transition" fleet, by giving auxiliary screws to all line-of-battle ships which are not too old; 2*d*, To build and arm gradually 150 rapid steamers, of different sizes, and of the best models known; 3*d*, To complete a transport fleet of 72 ships, partly by transforming the sailing frigates into steam transports, and partly by building new ships. To carry out this project, the Budget of the Marine Department is to receive an augmentation of 17 millions a-year, for fourteen years. With this increase the yearly ordinary expenditure of the navy reaches 122-124 millions of francs, or almost 5 millions sterling. The large increase in 1861 and 1862, to 168 millions, is exceptional, and accounted for by the expeditions to Syria, China, Cochin-china, and Mexico.

This is 10 millions of francs less than was spent during the last years of the July dynasty; and yet what a difference in the result! Frenchmen have had the satisfaction of taking, for the first time, the lead in naval matters. Their floating battery Avalanche was the only one at Kinburn, and the "Gloire" was the first ironclad frigate afloat. Imperialism has given them what they have long been sighing for in vain, and at a less cost than they paid for the experiments of its predecessor. That 3 milliards of francs, 120 millions sterling, which the navy has cost since 1840, is not too much for such a triumph over all rivals, is, I believe, the opinion of the great majority of Frenchmen.

Satisfaction of national pride, and the indulgence of national weaknesses, however gratifying in themselves, are expensive luxuries; and, after a time, they would have seemed barren and hollow, even to Frenchmen, had not measures been taken to enable the nation to bear, almost without feeling them, the sacrifices which these luxuries demand.

Of all the triumphs which the Imperial regime has gained in its ten years of existence, the most wonderful is the unprecedented growth of material welfare, and of the prosperity of all classes of society. There have been great wars, there have been failures of harvests, there have been commercial and financial crises, there has been lavish expenditure on the part of the State, and fabulous squandering on the part of individuals; and yet all these things seem scarcely to affect this growth, and France more easily bears her increased burdens than she did the smaller ones of thirteen years ago. This success is well worth studying.

The secret of it is to be sought in that clear appreciation of circumstances, and in that intimate knowledge of French character, for which the Imperial government is so conspicuous.

The materialistic tendency which seized Europe some thirty years ago, encountered great difficulties in France —a national character little given to individual enterprise; a government watched with suspicion, and having, therefore, little power to supply this want by its own initiative; prejudices of long growth in the people; and narrow-minded views in the legislation. With such obstacles in the way, material development could not make the rapid progress which otherwise might have been expected from the natural resources of the country, and

93703

the position of the people in the scale of civilisation. Indeed, so far did France remain behind, that the idea more and more gained ground that Frenchmen, however brilliant in other respects, were unfit to keep their place in the industrial and commercial race of nations. This idea, already strong before 1848, seemed only confirmed by the Revolution of February, and the three years of political agitation which followed.

The crisis led to exhaustion; and the nation, weary of politics, turned its attention to material interests, which had been so much neglected. This was understood; and when the political arena was closed in 1851, a large field of industrial and commercial enterprise was opened as a compensation, and the Government undertook to guide the people on this road.

There is an impression prevalent that this interference and assistance of the Government in works of public utility, and in industrial and commercial enterprises, dates from the beginning of the Imperial regime. Nothing can be more erroneous. There is not a year since 1820, in which extraordinary works do not figure in the Budget with sums varying from 25 to 170 millions of francs, which were employed in the construction of canals, roads, and railways, the improvement of rivers and ports, erection of lighthouses, and other works. Above all, the last years of the Government of Louis Philippe show sums which have never been reached since 1852. This was owing to the first impulse given to railways, and to the fortifications of Paris. The Imperial Government, therefore, in this respect, only followed its predecessors, with the difference, however, that it had the skill to see their mistakes, and at the same time the power to carry out its own views.

With a people having so little power of initiating individual enterprise, Government encouragement and assistance could not be dispensed with, only it had to be regulated so as to be a stimulus, and not to act as a narcotic, on individual enterprise. Neither the Restoration, nor the Government of July, kept the proper limit in this respect. It was not so much their fault as that of the prevalent popular prejudices which found their expression in the Chambers, and to which the Government was obliged to yield. As the chief prejudice was that the Government could not do too much, the interference was such that it left little scope for the exertion of individuals, and made capitalists more timid than they had been before.

The Imperial Government followed another plan. It used its power for the industrial and commercial education of the people, for eradicating those prejudices, and for removing those obstacles, legislative and others, which have so long stood in the way of material development. Government assistance was to be only the leaven to call forth individual enterprise. The difficulty was not so much to lay down this rule as to apply it in a systematic and successful way. It was impossible to adopt a general formula : each case had to be judged separately ; its influence on other branches of industry and commerce had to be taken into account ; and the resources of the Government so apportioned that each should receive its fair share. The large view taken by the Government in this respect enabled it to give that general impulse to the material prosperity of the country, which has been a matter of astonishment to the world.

The most curious feature in this undeniable success is, that the Government obtained it at a less cost than

its predecessors had incurred for the same purpose. Strange as this may sound, it is borne out by figures. During the eight years from 1852 to 1859 inclusive, 435,211,635 francs, or about £17,500,000 appear in the Budgets for Extraordinary Works; while in the eight years before, from 1844 to 1851, 861,573,248 francs, or £35,000,000, figure in the Budget; but even in the eight years before that, when no fortifications of Paris or railways were built, 412,201,149 francs, or £16,500,000, were spent for extraordinary works. Thus in the eight years immediately before the beginning of Imperialism the expense was double, and in the eight years before little less. It is true that from 1858 the remaining portion of the liabilities of Government towards railway companies, amounting to 160 millions, was converted into 30 annual payments of 6 millions a-year; but while the Extraordinary Budget was thus relieved by 35 millions a-year, several items for making roads, improving rivers, &c., which formerly figured in the Ordinary Budget, were transferred to the Budget of Extraordinary Works. At any rate, taking all this into account, we have the statement of the Emperor himself, in his speech opening the Legislative Session, that in ten years only 622 millions were spent for this purpose, or 240 millions less than had been spent in the eight years before 1852. As the object of this statement was to prove that the money was well spent, no one will doubt that the sums spent for works of public utility have been liberally added up.

The expenses caused by extraordinary works do not, however, represent the whole outlay of the Government in promoting, encouraging, and helping individual enterprise. There is, besides, the Budget of the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce, and the ordinary Budget

of the Ministry of Public Works, which are united under one direction, and absorb, the first, from 15 to 16 millions a-year, and the second, until lately, 70 millions a-year, which, however, by the transfer, as above stated, of several items to the Budget of Extraordinary Works, has been reduced, in 1859, to 53 millions. These sums are just the same as those spent during the latter years of the government of July for such purposes.

Taking both ordinary and extraordinary expenses together, a sum of 1300 millions, or £52,000,000 results, which represents the "leaven" used up by Imperialism, in ten years, for stimulating national enterprise and promoting national prosperity, against 1706 millions, or £68,000,000, laid out in the ten years before that.

How the smaller leaven produced a higher "rise" under Imperialism, will be best seen from some details about its application, which may be fitly given under the title of THE IMPERIAL FERTILISING SYSTEM.

CHAPTER VII.

THE IMPERIAL FERTILISING SYSTEM.

THE stranger who visits the gardens of Shoubra, near Cairo, cannot but admire the energy which has succeeded in creating, amid a sandy desert, one of the most luxuriant retreats of shade and verdure. It is all owing to a little water, the "life of all things," as the Eastern saying is. But in vain would the fructifying waters of the Nile be poured over the black basalt rocks of Nubia; they would not elicit a blade of grass from them. That yellow sand, so hot and arid, contains powerful germs of fertility, which are wanting in the black rocks.

Not to waste energy on barren rocks, but to bestow it where a rich return may be expected, is the guiding principle of the Imperial Government. Its assistance is made conditional on individual exertion, and is offered in the most different ways. Sometimes it takes the shape of Government protection, of great privileges, amounting almost to a monopoly, as in the case of the Credit Mobilier and other institutions of credit. In other cases great immediate advantages are held out, so as to attract capital; as, for instance, in the construction of the railways. At other times, again, Government stimulates private enterprise

by a system of prizes and distinctions, as in the Industrial and Agricultural Shows; or else it takes altogether the initiative, reclaims marshes, forms plantations on sandy landes, and then disposes of the reclaimed lands at low prices. Not unfrequently Government assistance is obtruded by a kind of gentle pressure, to stimulate slovenly and timid municipal and departmental councils in the same direction.

Nor must it be forgotten that the inducements and encouragements thus held out are made by a Government wielding practically unlimited power, and possessing the means of bestowing favours or making its displeasure felt,—circumstances which cannot fail to influence a people so accustomed to look up to Government.

The first object to which this new method of Government assistance was applied was the railway system. It was a legacy bequeathed to the Imperial Government by its predecessors. While in England and America the construction of railways was left altogether to private enterprise, and Parliament and Congress, following their old traditions, refused to give exceptional privileges and monopolies, continental governments took an opposite course. Everywhere it was laid down as the rule that to Government must belong all initiative in the matter. Nowhere was this principle carried so much to an extreme as in France. Not only did the Government itself trace out the network of railways which was to be constructed, but it adopted as a rule that all railways should be in the hands of the Government, which would thus derive not merely a considerable source of revenue, but likewise a large patronage, and the control over this rapid means of communication in times of political crisis. The only question was,

whether the Government should construct them altogether at its own expense, or whether, in consideration of the delay which would result from the impossibility of the Government making the large initial outlay rapidly enough, it would not be advisable to call to its aid private capitalists, allowing them to contribute a portion of the expenditure, and giving them in return short concessions for the working of the lines. Both views had their ardent supporters in the Chambers; and the end was an unsatisfactory compromise, which not only retarded in many cases the construction, but became the source of much waste in the outlay. The compromise was, that no general rule should be laid down, but that each case should be judged on its own merits. Thus some lines, like that from Paris to Lille, or the Chemin de fer de la Bretagne, were constructed directly by the Government, while others, like the Chemin de fer de l'Est, were constructed half by the Government and half by a company. In almost every such concession both the conditions and the terms of the concession varied. The law of 1842 became, however, the model for such concessions. According to this the State paid for earthworks and for one-third of the ground, the departments and commonalties paid for another third of the ground, and only the rest of the outlay was at the charge of the companies, which were further assisted by loans from the Government. In spite of these facilities the railways did not prosper; most of the companies were only kept up with the greatest difficulty; and on one of the most important lines, that of Paris and Lyons, the Government had actually to take back the concession, and continue the works on its own account. It was a case of killing with kind-

ness. Instead of being stimulated to exertion, the companies relied on the Government, and in most cases lost all power of expansion. Each company endeavoured to become the most favoured; little rivalries ensued to the great disadvantage of the common interest. Private capital was unwilling to aid in an enterprise where Government authorities had so much power to interfere, and where the term of concession was too short to allow sufficient time for the development of a large remunerative traffic. The result of all this was, that at the establishment of the Imperial régime, not more than 3541 kilometres, or 1270 miles of railway, dragged on a wretched existence.

Invested, in 1852, with full powers of opening extraordinary credits for the construction of the large railway network decreed in 1842, the Imperial Government gradually reversed the whole system which had been introduced by its predecessors. The practice of constructing and working railways at the expense of the Government was from the outset condemned, and measures taken at once to form companies to take off the hands of the Government those lines which were its property. Although the idea of an ultimate reversion of all the principal railways to Government was not given up in theory, the uniform grant of a ninety-nine years' lease to the companies, instead, as before, of half that time, or even less, was virtually giving them a right of proprietorship. All companies were reconstructed on this basis. Liberal terms were given both to the companies which took the Government lines, and to the old ones which were still under large obligations for outlays made by Government; but at the same time the condition was imposed that they should greatly extend their respective lines. In order

to facilitate this, every effort was made to effect a fusion of all the smaller lines into a few large ones, which should divide the whole territory of France into so many regions. At present the number of these lines has been reduced to six, and they comprise all the railways, with the exception of about sixty miles, which are still in the hands of the smaller companies. Government subventions were not altogether stopped, but they were every year more reduced. From 30 and 40 per cent of the outlay—their former proportion—they gradually sank to 20 per cent and less; until in 1857, when a large construction of branch railways (4000 miles) was decreed, subventions were in most cases dropped, and a guarantee of 4.65 per cent as interest and sinking fund on a certain maximum of expense for fifty years, was adopted as the rule. If the revenues of the old lines exceeded a certain sum per mile, the surplus was to be applied as part of the guarantee stipulated by the Government for the new branch lines; if these latter should at any time yield more than the guarantee, the surplus was to be used to repay the sums expended by Government as guarantee; and, after 1872, all revenues of old and new lines beyond a fixed sum were to be shared with the Government. The system of direct subventions was only kept up in exceptional cases, where the Government was specially interested from military or other motives; but, taking all this together, it is calculated that the proportion of expense borne by the Government in these branch lines amounts to no more than from 20,000 to 25,000 francs—£800 to £1000—per kilometre, or about 7 per cent of the outlay, against £4000 per kilometre, or 30 per cent, which had been the average in the old lines.

By these means a complete revolution has, within the last ten years, been effected in the French railway system. They have changed their character as government concerns, and have become private enterprises. The effect of this emancipation is plainly visible in the progress which railways have made since that time. From 3541 kilometres in 1851, they had risen in the beginning of this year 10,096, or above 5000 miles, and this result has been achieved at about one-half of the expense entailed on the Government by the former system. The whole expense of the construction alone may be calculated at 4,008,042,000 of francs, or an average of 397,000 francs per kilometre ; out of this, about one-fourth was contributed by Government, but while it had spent above 600 millions for the original 3541 kilometres constructed till 1851, it had contributed about 350 millions only for the 6557 constructed since that time. On the other hand, in spite of the heavy expenditure since 1852 (about 2603 millions of francs, not counting the rolling stock), the companies have become proverbial for their prosperity, and excite the astonishment of railway shareholders all over the world. The dividends vary between 7 and 15 per cent, and in some instances, as in the case of the Orleans railway, have reached 20 per cent. It would be superfluous to speak of the reaction which this extension of very rapid and cheap means of transport had on commerce and industry ; but it will scarcely be an exaggeration to assume that both in point of time and of cost a reduction of three-fourths has been effected.

But while giving so powerful an impulse to these great arteries, the other means of communication were by no means neglected. Among these must be classed

first the roads. All roads having been free of tolls from time immemorial, Government could not resort to private enterprise by offering the prospect of large profits. It had therefore to apply its system of assistance in another shape in order to obtain the co-operation of those interested in the matter. It tried the charms of example, the temptations of conditional money grants from the Treasury, and the seduction of loans, which placed means within the reach of departments and communes without necessitating a sudden large outlay. The roads in France are of three kinds —Imperial, departmental, and vicinal roads—the first constructed and maintained entirely at the charge of the Government, the second at that of the departments, and the last of the communes. Although railways have in some measure superseded Imperial roads, the traffic upon them is still estimated at 1600 millions of tons a-year per kilometre; and the Government has thought it necessary to spend, in ordinary and extraordinary works, larger sums upon them than were expended when railroads either did not exist, or were still in their infancy. From 30 to 33 millions of francs a-year have been on an average applied for this purpose. With these sums it was possible to combine the road system effectually with the railway system, without neglecting the roads which, running parallel to railways, had become of less use. The roads running at right angles to them, neglected before, and far more important now, received special attention; their course was rectified, and the gaps between them filled up.

With such an example before them, the departments and communes could not but follow, especially as "Préfets" and "Maires" did not fail to point out the use-

fulness and desirability of making an effort on their part. Their budgets show strong traces of the efficacy of the persuasive powers of the authorities. The budgets of the departments exhibit an increase of one-third of what they were before the Empire, and every year from 20 to 25 millions of extraordinary taxes are proposed by the departments and authorised by Government, the greatest portion of which is applied to the service of roads. On the whole, out of a revenue of 110 millions of francs, 48 millions on an average are spent for this purpose, making about 10 millions more than before the Empire. Besides this, above 100 millions in loans have been authorised, one-half of which is likewise destined for roads.

The communes have not remained behind. In 1851, partly in labour and partly in money, they spent on vicinal roads from 85 to 87 millions, while the expenditure now amounts to very nearly 100 millions a-year. In this case, too, loans have been resorted to; and last year alone 34 towns were authorised to contract loans to the amount of 82 millions of francs, out of which 23 millions are to be applied to means of communication. In order to encourage these efforts on the part of the municipalities, direct grants are from time to time given by the Government, which invariably act as a spur. Thus, from 1852 to 1856, when there was a scarcity of provisions, 12,500,000 francs were given; last year again 25 millions were allotted, which, if addresses from municipal councils are to be trusted, will lead to new exertions.

These money grants are a kind of gentle pressure and seduction, which is resorted to by the Government not only in the matter of roads, but in all useful and

ornamental works in which the co-operation of departments or municipalities is desirable. There is always plenty of such improvements which are either obvious, or which are easily suggested to municipal councils —rivers require regulating, ports are insecure, quays and bridges are giving way, towns must be improved, streets widened, swamps and waste lands wait to be reclaimed, &c. Government is applied to, and always found willing to take the subject seriously. The only remaining question is the money. With all its goodwill and liberality, it cannot undertake to defray all these large expenses; but it is ready to contribute a part under the condition that the municipalities do the rest. They are already too heavily burdened to bear so large an outlay, but there are plenty of capitalists who will advance the money; and the advantages resulting from the work will more than repay the outlay, or else the resources are growing so rapidly that a fancy may be safely indulged in now and then. The spirit of emulation does the rest. Paris, Lyons, Marseilles, and other large towns, headed the movement, and no one wants to remain behind, the country any more than the towns.

This system of encouragement by grants of money is not confined to works undertaken by departments and communes; it extends in many cases to individual enterprises. With the view, for instance, of making coal accessible to the consumer at low prices, subsidies are given to mining companies for the construction of roads, canals, and tramways. In order to promote drainage, the Crédit foncier is authorised to make loans to the amount of 100 millions of francs on account of the Government, and this latter guarantees 4

per cent on them. In order to fertilise the plains of the Dordogne, depôts of sea-sand are formed at reduced prices. About 10 millions of francs go every year to encourage agriculture; and lately, when the new commercial policy was decided upon, similar favours have been extended to manufactures. A law, passed in August 1860, empowers the Government to make a loan of 40 millions of francs to manufactures for improvement of machinery, with a view to facilitate competition with foreign countries: and so on, in an endless list, until the mind is quite bewildered by this attempt to revive the Indian god Vishnu, the many-headed and many-handed. Nothing seems too large for the power of Government, or too small to attract its attention.

But there is a stimulus and an assistance more efficient than money grants which a powerful Government can apply in favour of private enterprises, in a country where nothing can be done without its direct authorisation, and where even the most minute details of industrial and commercial establishments are subject to rules and regulations. One stroke of the pen can, under these circumstances, decide the prosperity or failure of an enterprise. The system is due, not to Imperialism, but to its predecessors; and whatever opinion may be entertained of its advantages and disadvantages, it must be admitted that it has been used by the present régime as one of the most effective lures to stimulate private exertion and to encourage capital. This is apparent enough in the rapid growth of commercial societies since 1846; after falling off during the revolution from 2747 to 1511, they are now close upon 5000, or nearly double what they were in the most prosperous times before 1848. Institutions of credit, insurance, railway, canal,

mining, industrial, gas, and steamboat companies, &c., have sprung up with a rapidity quite astonishing, and have in most cases yielded large profits. Although monopolies have been long abolished in theory, the influence and favours which the Government can confer in authorising the statutes of the companies, are such as to diminish competition, and sometimes to make it altogether impossible. But, whatever the favours bestowed be, they are only to be obtained at the price of corresponding individual exertion, which thus forms the great cause of the success of the system. It is making others do, rather than doing itself.

The direct action of the Government is reserved for those cases where some new idea is to be applied, which might otherwise have remained fruitless. Whoever knows the strong prejudices and the want of initiative in the French people, might almost forgive such action, however unreasonable it may appear to more enterprising nations. The Government has in almost all such cases shown itself far ahead of the people, and has had to educate the latter. Thus agricultural shows, industrial exhibitions, horse races, were almost unknown before the establishment of the Imperial régime, and would probably be so now had the Government not stepped in. What the views of the people in general are even now on this subject, may be gathered from the circumstance that the exhibitors for the present International Exhibition, when disappointed in their demands for space, laid the blame on the method adopted in England of getting up exhibitions by private enterprise, which could not do things so liberally as governments can.

Another point in question was internal navigation.

The success of the liberal commercial policy, and of the development of industry, depended greatly on facility of communication, in which the rivers and canals naturally played a considerable part. The former being in the hands of Government, not only were large sums yearly spent (15,400,000 francs on an average) to regulate them, but their tariffs have been greatly reduced. With the canals, half of which are in the hands of companies, difficulties were encountered in the way of reducing the tariffs, and the Government decided to buy them back; four of the largest are already bought back, and negotiations are going on for the rest. As soon as these are settled, a large uniform reduction will offer new facilities of internal communication to commerce.

But no stimulus or assistance, applied either directly or indirectly, promises more for the development of individual enterprise than the new commercial legislation which has been lately introduced. Competition supplies a stimulus far more powerful and regular than any grants of money and government privileges can do. It is one of the strangest contradictions that, in a country which prides itself so much on its application of the principle of equality, class interests should have been so long favoured, to the detriment of common interests. While England, under the "thraldom of its proud aristocracy," has years ago dealt out equal measure to the aristocratic landlord and the plebeian manufacturer, in France both agricultural and manufacturing interests maintained their unfair advantages over the general consumer, in spite of revolutions, republics, and social and economical theories, until the Imperial Government stepped in with its levelling propensities, and opened the road to a more reasonable

system. In spite of Imperial omnipotence, this throwing down the gauntlet was a bold step, and it required great faith in the efficacy of free-trade principles in a government which bases itself above all on the prosperity of material interests which have grown up under its tutelage. But the faith remained unshaken by any outcries and sinister auguries of those interested. The only effect of these latter seems to have been to lay down a regular system for the gradual introduction of the change, as we can now discern when the change has taken place.

The leading idea evidently was to bring about the change in such a way as to introduce foreign competition under the most favourable circumstances. Viewed in this light, the forcible impulse given to native industry from the onset, the Industrial Exhibition in 1855—which must have convinced the most stubborn of the superiority of French industry on many points, —and finally the free introduction of raw material a considerable time before that of foreign manufactures, were so many steps to give to French industry every possible advantage :—a free flow of capital, confidence in its own strength, and cheap materials to work upon. Scarcely six months have passed, and the calculation has already been so far justified that the opposition of the most stubborn has been almost silenced.

As for the falling-off in the revenue by the reduction of the tariff, any fears entertained on this point have been set at rest. Even in the first three months, from October to December, the falling-off was little more than nominal; and in the last three months the revenue had already shown a surplus, not only over 1860, but even over 1859—that is, the time before the reduction.

The predictions about the ensuing ruin of French industry have been even more signally falsified. The increased exportation of French produce into England and Belgium has not only counterbalanced the importation of manufactures from these countries, but the beginning of the new commercial movement has contributed greatly to remedy the effects of the American war. It was as if constancy should have its reward. Scarcely was the sliding scale on grain abandoned, when a bad harvest showed all the advantages of free importation; and scarcely were the prohibitive duties on manufactures removed, when the American crisis showed the beneficial commercial policy which alone could neutralise the effects of such occurrences.

From this rapid sketch, the method may be learnt which has been devised by Imperialism to elicit the dormant energies of the nation. It would require volumes to follow it into detail; but there can be no two opinions about the great success of the method. It is a fact which obtrudes itself at every step in France, and which is manifested by the prominent position which France has of late taken among the commercial and industrial nations of the world. But more startling than this success itself may be some day the effect of this undermining of prejudices and stimulating of individual exertion on the character of a people, which has been almost proverbial for its want of individual enterprise and initiative, and on the social condition of a country noted for the violence of its party and class rivalries. Indeed, the transformation is already so apparent, that it cannot fail to strike the most superficial observer.

CHAPTER VIII.

MONEYMANIA.

FOLLOWING the stream of Paris life, the first clear impression which we become conscious of is, that it runs very quick. There is a feverish activity perceptible in everything that surrounds us, strangely contrasting with that regular gentler current which once gave Paris the reputation for being the place above all others for *flâneurs, badauds,* and pleasure-seekers. Alas for those halcyon days of enjoyment, when thoughtless Parisians only busied themselves with tying flower-wreaths round the sharp scythe of old Father Chronos; when pleasure seemed the only aim worth struggling for; when a merry dinner meant a well-spent day and night; when an aimless stroll on the Boulevards or in the Champs Elysées was an ever fresh source of amusement; when the atmosphere itself seemed impregnated with Attic salt which gave new relish to the most trivial trifles; when an émeute was enjoyed like a *cancan* on a grand scale, and a revolution got up like a *bal masqué* out of season.

Those days are gone by, probably to return no more. What has succeeded, is difficult to define. No word has as yet been coined to name this new epoch, but the slang word "fast" characterises it perhaps better than

any other. It is as if Imperialism had quickened the pulse of the population to 200, or as if it had shortened life by one-half, and as if everyone was anxious to make up for the loss by greater vitality. A feverish rapidity of motion has seized everybody and everything. Men, women, children, old and young, rich and poor, high and low, all follow the impulse, and whirl along none can tell exactly where. Is it vanity, selfishness, or love of gain, thirst for pleasure, or rage of excitement, which impels? There is something of all this in the mad race. And yet how reconcile vanity with such bold and open cynicism? Is selfishness compatible with so much thoughtlessness, or love of gain with so much foolish recklessness? Are these pleasures where no one amuses himself? and can there be a rage for excitement where nothing seems spontaneous and all is calculation?

What is obvious and unmistakable in the race is the kicking up of clouds of dust. The greater the dust the greater seems the fun; and whoever succeeds best in this respect is sure to excite admiration and to attract the crowds. There must be something intoxicating in this blinding of the neighbour, even if it be at the risk of choking yourself. The game reminds one of the Carnivalone of Milan, and of the Coriandoli, when the whole population is seized by the spirit of mischief, and hurl at each other little bales of gypsum until every one is half blind and choked. In the saturnalia of Paris the dust is not white gypsum; it is glittering dust, looking like gold, but proving more frequently sham. But what does this matter? it glitters and blinds, and the crowd follows.

This game of "blinding my neighbour" is as old as the world; but rarely, if ever, has it been carried on with

such zest or brought to such perfection as in the present instance. There is no attempt anywhere to mince matters or to look demure; every one knows that every one else does it, and that all depends on success; success, however ephemeral and precarious, is invaluable, for it is accepted as a proof of skill, or, what is more valued, of luck. It exercises an irresistible attraction on others, and creates immediately a position for him who has achieved it. The more sudden the success, the more every one is ready to bow down before it: no one inquires about antecedents, or about the means by which success has been attained; the world at large is ready to accept it such as it is; and if here and there the voice of suspicion is raised, it probably arises from those who have themselves tried, but failed. This acquiescence is doubly remarkable in a country where the principle "that every one is supposed to be innocent until he is proved guilty," has never been recognised or practised.

Neither can all be successful in this desperate race, nor can any one be shown who has been invariably successful: but such is the excitement produced by the rapidity of the movement, that the effects of failure scarcely ever last for more than a few days, and are readily forgiven and forgotten if another effort is followed by fresh success.

It is the recklessness and excitement of gambling admitted into all spheres and transactions of life, public as well as private, commercial as well as social; the race is neither to the swiftest, strongest, nor even to the most skilled, but to the boldest—to him who can best keep up the appearance of success.

The candour which is exhibited in this respect has

something decidedly exhilarating for the spectator, who may perchance remember certain high-sounding principles, which found so ready an echo in France not very many years ago. To the moralist the effect of the spectacle will be one of sadness; he will probably see in it the deplorable result of decadence and demoralisation. The light-minded French people, like the heartless old coquette, worn out by former excesses, has turned to bigotry and gambling.

The Flâneur whose mind is open to exhilarating as well as sad impressions, sees in this turmoil but another expression of that impetuosity and proneness to excess which has at all times made the attacks of French horse and foot so formidable,—which has converted the most turbulent aristocracy into the most servile courtiers,—which makes Frenchmen endure for years the most humiliating subjection, and then again scorn for a time all control,—which makes French theorists the most captivating of thinkers, and French politicians the most impracticable of mortals.

The same tendency to excess must needs lead, in an age of materialistic propensities and of commercial speculations, to reckless gambling in all the transactions of life. It is but a novel form for venting the old energy which has been diverted from other channels into this one,—to live, to shine, to throw up dust, to be successful.

The revelations made during the Mirès affair have thrown a strange light on the spirit which pervades speculations in France.

Mirès, another Hudson, migrates from Bordeaux to Paris, and becomes in a few years the idol of the Bourse. He eclipses the most formidable rivals, who

throw out in vain dark hints and insinuations. He seems to have revived the old fable of Midas—whatever he touches becomes gold. He improvises the *Caisse Générale des chemins de fer*, a joint-stock company on a large scale, intended to make advances on all kinds of securities, and to find capital for every kind of enterprise. Wonderful dividends are declared; and high and low, and great and small press forward to commit their money to his stewardship. This lasts till 1860; when fortune seems to get tired of its favourite, and rumours more sinister than ever are afloat. A rare opportunity offers itself to retrieve all losses. The Turk wants a loan sadly; and the Caisse Générale beats all other competitors, and secures the loan on terms almost as advantageous as those which were deemed so acceptable a short time ago. This moment is chosen by one of Mirès's own associates to press a heavy personal claim, backed up by the threat of judicial exposure in case of noncompliance. The negotiations on the subject lead to mutual defiance; and the complaint is lodged with the Procureur Impérial. Mirès is arrested and closely confined. The books are examined by experts, and a report drawn up by them. The case comes before the Tribunal Correctional de la Seine, and Mirès is charged with embezzlement and betrayal of trust. He is accused of having speculated with the securities intrusted to him, and having defrauded his clients by his failure; he is charged with a forced and fraudulent liquidation, with buying up the shares at low prices and reselling them again at a profit, and with distributing false dividends.

The defence is, that the accused had been closely confined and had had no access to his own books, from

which he could clearly prove that mistakes had been made by the experts—that all could be explained. He maintained that the securities were not deposits but "gages" (pledges), like gold, silver, and other valuables; that the clients were well aware of this, as their receipts never contained the numbers, but only the general nature of the securities, as, for instance, so many shares of Austrian railways, or so many shares of *Crédit Mobilier;* that the Caisse could therefore negotiate them at its own risk, provided it was ready to give back an equal number of the same securities when called upon to do so. If there was now a loss, it was owing to the violent and unjustifiable procedure against Mirès just at the moment when the Turkish loan held out a fair chance of making up for all losses. As for the forced liquidation, it was made in the interest of the clients and not of Mirès, who had lost instead of gaining by the transaction. The experts had made the mistake of not including all the shares in their account, which led them to state that the transaction had been a profitable one. The dividends which were distributed were calculated so as to include the probable profits of pending enterprises; if reality did not correspond to expectation, it was owing to the general commercial crisis, which none could foresee; but they were for all that *bonâ fide* dividends. It was hinted during the trial that the whole originated in a powerful cabal against the defendant, who, if driven to extremes, would spare no one.

In spite of all this, Mirès was found guilty of the charges, and condemned to five years' imprisonment. He appealed to the Cour de Cassation. In the mean time, being allowed access to the books, pamphlet after pamphlet appeared on the subject by Mirès himself, as

well as two of his legal advisers, stating the unfairness of the trial, and trying to confute the report of the experts. This was likewise the line taken in the defence before the Cour de Cassation. Several mistakes were pointed out in the report, and a new examination of the books was demanded. This demand was refused by the court, which declared itself sufficiently "eclairée" on the subject; nevertheless, the charge of embezzlement and fraud in the *particular cases*, which had been pointed out by the report, were declared not proved, and the accusation turned only on the *general fraudulency* of the system pursued by the Caisse Générale. It was argued that the securities were in the eyes of the law a *bonâ fide deposit*, which could not be touched; that the forced liquidation, without the consent or even knowledge of the clients, and the practice of assuming probable profits as already realised, were most reprehensible proceedings, which opened the door to fraud, and could therefore not be tolerated.

The defence was that the laws which were invoked had been framed at a time when commercial transactions and the Stock Exchange were in their infancy, and that, were they applied in rigour now, all enterprise would be checked. It was just this *trust* in the financial capacity of individuals, and the *latitude* allowed to their discretion and skill, which gave such impulse to enterprise. If the securities on which the Caisse Générale made advances were to be locked up in their safe, they were so much waste paper for them, whereas by their circulation they became available for new enterprises. The rapidity of Stock Exchange transactions was such nowadays that it was impossible to ask and wait for the consent of hundreds of clients; and unless large

powers are granted to the financiers at the head of large companies, favourable moments may be lost, and great losses incurred in times of sudden crises. This was so well understood by the clients themselves in the affair of the forced liquidation, that only few complained, and most of them bought back again when the crisis was over. In the matter of the dividends, all was done in broad daylight, and consented to by the parties interested. What was done in all these cases is what is *done by all financiers.* Mirès was not worse, but very likely better in this respect than others. Finally, allusion was made to the *services* which Mirès had rendered to *the general national welfare,* by being the author of so many thriving enterprises, which now suffered because he had been interrupted in his activity just at the critical moment.

The Cour de Cassation acquitted Mirès of the charges of fraud and embezzlement in the cases brought forward against him; but maintained the sentence of the first court as a punishment for the *illegal practices amounting to a betrayal of trust,* which the defendant himself had admitted his being guilty of.

The Cour Imperiale of Douai, which has been appealed to in the last instance, has just reversed this sentence, and acquitted Mirès of all the charges brought against him, and Mirès has been received with quite an ovation at the Bourse, and bids fair to become more powerful and idolised than ever before.

Hints are thrown out that the acquittal was brought about by influential persons, who feared lest Mirès, seeing all hope gone, would make good his threats and compromise them. But, be this as it may, the "Procès Mirès" will form an epoch in the commercial legislation

of France. The Cour Impériale of Douai, by acquitting Mirès, has bowed down before modern Stock Exchange ideas, as expounded by the defendant—it has repudiated old-fangled notions, and legalised all the practices which the lower courts had condemned as in direct contradiction to the laws of the country. This sanction is so much the more significant as the first court of appeal, while acquitting Mirès of fraud, had nevertheless maintained the original sentence as a punishment for the *general illegality* of his business transactions. The threat which was thus held out against all those who might have followed the same system has been now removed; and the managers of joint-stock companies have become the absolute masters of the interests of the shareholders. They may speculate freely with deposits intrusted to their keeping, sell the shares of their clients at discretion, calculate the dividends according to their own convenience; the only precaution required is that their books should show as little profit as possible; they may live like Crœsuses, enrich their wives, provide for their children, relations, and friends; if they can show by their books that they were merely unlucky, they are quite safe.

The acquittal pronounced by the High Court of Appeal has been sanctioned by the verdict of the Bourse, which received Mirès like a hero and martyr. The ovation was less to the martyr of a powerful cabal than to the most daring champion of the current ideas of the Stock Exchange. His acquittal is the triumph of the Stock Exchange, which is now relieved of judicial apprehensions, and may indulge freely in its rage for speculation. No one has a right to complain that the law has withdrawn its protection from the public, and has delivered the shoals of small fry to become the prey of

large fish. The position is clearly defined, and whoever goes under the colonnade on the Place de la Bourse knows what he has to expect.

Shocking as the legalised moneymania may appear to the moralist, dangerous as it may prove to individuals, it can plead marvellous success in extenuation of its excesses and its wildness.

The country which, ten years ago, seemed barren of capital and devoid of all spirit of enterprise, and which could not muster enough of either for its own domestic wants, is now so teeming with both, that it bids fairly to take the lead in all Continental enterprises, and become the financial as well as the political capital of Europe.

Formerly, if potentates wanted money, or governments wished to construct railways, they looked almost exclusively to England, for there was not only more capital, but likewise a bolder spirit of venture than anywhere else. If a scheme found no support there, it was considered as hopeless, and dropped. Besides this, whenever a country was opened to enterprise, Englishmen were always the first in the field, and had in most cases not even competition to fear.

Not so now. England is no more the last refuge of needy potentates and governments; not that Englishmen have grown perhaps more cautious, but that Frenchmen have grown more daring, and ready to encounter risks for the chance of large profits. Many a scheme, after having in vain sought for supporters in England, finds them in France, and reappears under French auspices and direction, finding then the patronage which it laboured in vain to obtain before. Schemes implying more than common risks look more and more

towards Paris as the most likely place to possess the spirit of adventure necessary for them. All over the Continent French agents are busy getting up schemes, working to obtain concessions, and seizing every favourable opportunity for making money.

There are no statistical data by which it would be possible to estimate the number of enterprises at home and abroad which have been initiated by French enterprise within the last ten years, or the amount of French capital which has been found for them; but the list of some of the most prominent suffices to give an idea of what has been done.

The loans made by the French Government alone represent a sum of £100,000,000, if we include the Obligations Trentenaires and the last conversion of the 4½ per cents; the railways in France, rolling stock and plant included, at least £150,000,000; the loans of the three cities of Paris, Lyons, and Marseilles, not less than £10,000,000; the loans to other towns and communes, about £2,000,000; those of the departments quite £9,000,000. Then come the great credit establishments, such as the Crédit Foncier, Comptoir d'Escompte, Crédit Mobilier, Bank of Algeria, numbers of insurance, and dock, port, omnibus, public conveyance, navigation, mining, gas companies, iron-foundries, and other industrial enterprises, which have been either initiated or else greatly extended during that period. It is impossible to calculate what amount of capital all these enterprises have absorbed, but, whatever the amount, it was almost exclusively French capital.

Abroad, French enterprise was not less active. Italian and Spanish loans, Spanish Crédit Mobilier, Italian railways, Lombard, Venetian, South Austrian, Roman, Span-

ish, Swiss, all represent in a great measure French capital, French institutions, and are under French management; while in many other enterprises of a similar nature France has not less contrived to get her share.

In seeing such exuberance of capital, it is impossible not to remember the former dearth of it, and inquire where such a sudden flow could have come from.

To be a Rentier, and to enjoy the *otium cum dignitate*, were the most cherished dreams of the Frenchmen of yore. The artisan and shopkeeper toiled for years, and economised to realise this dream; and if he was successful enough to acquire a capital which would give him a few thousand francs of interest, he laid down his tools or got rid of his shop, installed himself in some suburban villa, and played the gentleman. He was content with little enough, but wanted that little secure, so he bought Government securities, or else houses and land.

But whether the son of one of these self-made Rentiers or the son of some small proprietor, he who was fortunate enough to inherit a competency, however small, would rarely dream of exerting himself to increase it by his own labour—to take to business, and toil while he could eke out a living. There was not a trace of that strong desire to better his fortunes, and of that inclination to go out into the world and trust to his energy, for which the Anglo-Saxon race is so conspicuous. Actual starvation alone could induce the son of even the humblest cultivator or rentier to shake off his indolence.

A large amount both of capital and energy was thus locked up every year, instead of being turned to the production of fresh capital. In vain were tempting offers held out as a bait; the anxiety to keep what had

been gained proved stronger than every temptation. Under this system, all accumulation of capital became impossible; as the small capitals were made, they were withdrawn, and, with few exceptions, every one had to begin afresh.

The new spirit which has come over the French has completely upset this system. All the small capital which had lain dormant has now been brought forward, and it is this principally which feeds French enterprises. While in England the average of shares is £100, in France this average is £20; and even £50 shares are very rare. By this means an opportunity is given to the possessors of the smallest savings to interest themselves in speculation. It is the system of association for the million, and was carried to its farthest limits in the Government loans, where the lowest rentes were fixed at ten francs, or eight shillings. As a consequence, nowhere, probably, is the "rabble" of the Stock Exchange larger than in France; and it was as much with the view of restricting this rabble as of making an income, that the municipality of Paris introduced a few years ago certain restrictions and payments which told against the Coulissiers. But this was cutting off the very nerve of French speculation; and so great was the outcry, that the Emperor stepped in last year, and had the restriction withdrawn. The grateful Stock Exchange voted a statue, which, however, was declined by the Emperor.

There is probably no country in the world in which example has such power as in France. The French soldier alone is a forlorn, helpless being, but he becomes a hero when before the eyes of his comrades. Similarly, the small French capitalist, timid and narrow-minded, drawn by this system of popular association into the

vortex of speculation, has now become bold and enterprising. As he formerly toiled to secure his rentes and idleness, he works doubly now to enable him to try his luck on the Stock Exchange. Having once tasted the sweets of rapid gain and the excitement produced by it, he can no more do without it. He seeks for them not only in the Exchange, but in his own business; he becomes enterprising, enlarges his manufactory, improves his material, takes a shop in a better position, increases his business relations. Thus the mania for speculation has brought into activity not only a vast amount of small capital, but likewise a sum of individual energy which was formerly unemployed, and which has become now a rich source of wealth for France.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FIRST OF OCTOBER.

LET us fancy ourselves in a pheasant preserve, to the inmates of which a malignant fairy has revealed the meaning of the 1st of October. What a fluttering, what cries of distress, what rustling among the leaves! and yet this would give but a faint idea of the state of agitation which the approach of the 1st of October produced last year in Paris and all over France.

"The numerous hotels in the Rue de Rivoli, on the boulevards, and in the intermediate streets, are teeming with British and Belgian manufacturers, and every train of the Chemin de fer du Nord is disgorging new crowds of these birds of prey, eager to feed on our industry.

"The shops are infested by these intruders, trying in daytime to entice by artful devices the unsophisticated Parisian bourgeois, and displaying in the evening their triumphantly smiling countenances in the Bois, on the boulevards, and in the theatres."

"The entrepôts in Paris and in the towns opened for importation, are too small to receive the great masses of foreign goods, and the custom-house officers, although assisted by extra hands, cannot suffice for the enormous quantities that are waiting to be despatched."

"The Government is bent on our ruin. France will be inundated with foreign goods, and French industry swept away by the flood. Already the last returns in the 'Moniteur' show a considerable increase in the importation for the last eight months of the year, and a corresponding falling off of the export trade. Masters and workmen feel the effect of it; mills are working at short hours, and trade is stagnating just at the moment when winter is at hand, when the bad harvest drains the country of its ready-money, and provisions are rising in price. What will it be when the floodgates are once opened?"

Such were the voices which resounded from one end of France to the other at the approach of the ominous day. They were in many cases sincere.

France, which had been for centuries jealously protecting her home manufactures, was now at once opening her markets to her two most formidable rivals. Even those most confident in their power might well be uneasy; how much more the great mass who, ignorant and narrow-minded, were unable to judge of their probable positions under the new treaty of commerce? A differential duty from 15 to 20 per cent and costs of transport seemed but a poor consolation after the long enjoyment of monopoly; and the advantages gained by the treaty with respect to the importation of raw material duty free, were altogether forgotten.

The vague apprehensions of the mass of French industrials offered a favourable opportunity for the interested agitation of those who, while knowing how exaggerated these fears were, were yet unwilling to part with their profits without making a struggle for them. They had made their calculations, and had found that

the free importation of the raw material enabled them to produce most articles at the same price as English or Belgian manufacturers could, but they thought it good policy to work on the fears of others, and thus foil as long as they could the working of the new treaty.

They raised louder cries than any, in order to create a panic, and through it induce the whole industrial interest in France to combine against the invasion, and to frighten at the same time the Government itself.

The 'Moniteur Industrial,' the chief organ of this party, assisted by the clerical and a number of provincial papers devoted to local interests, did its task well enough, as may be seen from the results.

The much-dreaded 1st of October came, and imagination driven wild saw on every cart which passed through Paris tons of foreign goods. The 'Moniteur Universel,' less imaginative, reported a few days after that the whole quantity of foreign goods freed from bond on that day amounted in value to 4 millions of francs, of which the share of Paris was barely 3 millions. To appreciate fully this result, it will be well to recall that the commercial movement in 1860 shows an interchange of goods amounting to wellnigh a milliard of francs for England and 350 millions for Belgium. How is this to be explained?

The whole situation of France, as it appeared in the latter end of September, was serious enough to give importance to the loudly expressed apprehensions of the manufacturing interest; besides, common prudence counselled to mitigate if possible the first effect of this revolution in the commercial policy of the country.

The restriction of the importation to certain coast and frontier towns, and the publication of the list of

towns not a fortnight before the 1st of October, seemed already to indicate that the Government, if it did not share the panic, had yielded to it. These two measures were in themselves sufficient to break the first fury of importation. They left little time for preparation, and would have made it absolutely impossible to pass a large quantity of goods through the custom-house formalities. Even the comparatively small amount that was imported could not be cleared for the 1st of October.

The custom-house regulations were intentionally or unintentionally good allies in this respect. The custom-house officer all over the world seems to have inherited a larger share of the curse of Cain than any one else. His hand is raised against every man, and every man's hand is raised against him. He knows all mankind has conspired against him, and womankind too. The mercenary who tramples down a country by superior orders may find people who will excuse him; the jailer may excite pity; even the gendarme may now and then reckon on sympathy; but never the douanier. To get the better of him is a venial sin, nay almost a merit, and the daring smuggler is the hero of romance. What wonder if this continual feud with mankind embitters the feelings of this victim to duty, and develops in him the germs of distrust and misanthropy? After a few years' experience, he sees in every man and woman a vile deceiver—he suspects everybody, and believes in no man's honesty. He tears out his heart, and studies to acquire the nose of the retriever, the eye of the lynx, and the ear of the hare, as weapons against his relentless enemy, mankind.

Of all misanthropic douaniers the gay Frenchman is the most misanthropic. Who has not looked at the

melancholy countenance with which he is prowling about and inspecting new comers? Who has not heard those whining accents with which he asks whether you have anything to declare? Who has not caught that restless eye with which he follows the stranger about the place? He reminds you of jackals and hyænas. Poor devil! in other countries the faint glitter of a rouble or of a florin throws occasionally a brighter light on the gloomy existence of the douanier, and shows him the better side of human nature. This solace is denied to the French douanier. He is wretchedly paid, and there are no windfalls. It is not in vain that France boasts of an unrivalled financial administration, pays 180 millions of francs for it, and employs 80,000 persons in it. Control and solidarity are so linked in this complicated machinery, with its numberless wheels, that probity becomes a necessity independent of will. The process is lengthy, the cost enormous, but the machinery is perfect. Tradition ascribes its elements to le grand Sully, le grand Colbert, and the first Empire, but they were perfected by Barons Louis and Vilèlle under the Restoration; that is to say, the whole dates from a period when France sought her safety in protection—when the chief object was to keep out everything, and make France independent of the foreigner. This whole mechanism had only to be left to itself to be an effectual check to any inundation of foreign goods on the 1st of October.

Nor was it easy to change it all of a sudden, even by the best will. All that controlling and re-controlling, all those visés and passes, distinct packages for different goods, and specified declarations, form a necessary part of the machinery of the French custom-house, which,

in its turn, forms a part of the whole financial and controlling system of the country. Derange one wheel, however small, and the whole machinery ceases to work. It is like a commercial balance-sheet, where one penny's difference upsets the equilibrium.

It would require volumes to set forth this marvellous piece of human ingenuity in detail, to show how, in a country so eminently afflicted with the centralising mania, all official hierarchy is upset in the system of finance and control, and how, in each local branch of the same kind of revenue, three or four agents exist under the names of "directeurs," "controleurs," "inspecteurs," and "receveurs," all independent of each other, and frequently the employé lower in rank controlling him who is above him in rank and pay.

The whole is based on the principle that human nature is frail, and that therefore it ought not to be exposed to temptation. Those numberless formalities of which British importers are feeling the weight and annoyance, are so many barriers to keep the frail nature of the douanier from falling. As there is not much belief in unintentional stumblings, the douanier, whose whole existence is centred in the pittance he receives for his self-sacrifice, is more than usually nervous when any change takes place in the routine which he has been following.

To illustrate this I can give a case from my own experience. It was in the beginning of the war of 1859 I was returning in the steamer of the Messageries Impériales from the East, and on my way to Italy. The declaration of war had gone forth, and French steamers were not welcome to Neapolitan authorities in Sicily. Taking, therefore, the pretext of some ox-hides on

board, originally from Samsoun, but which had been lying for months at Stamboul, the authorities refused *pratique*, preventing thus the passengers from embarking on the steamers of the Italian line, and forcing them to continue their road to Marseilles. Arrived there, early in the morning I ran to the Messageries office to take places for myself, servant, and two horses which I had brought with me. I was told that strict orders had arrived from Paris forbidding the exportation of horses, and that they could not be taken on board without an express order of the "Directeur-Général des Douanes." Nothing remained but to go to the Directeur. A bland, diplomatic-looking gentleman, with the ruban rouge, received me with great condescension. I explained to him my errand, stating the circumstances of my involuntary journey to Marseilles. He was very sorry, but could not take the responsibility upon himself; all he could do was to write to Paris in this grave matter. I mildly observed that the steamer was leaving next morning, and that I should have to wait for several days. He then consented to telegraph. I was to draw up a petition stating my case, have it signed by the Consul, and then bring it back. When I returned, I was told that, after consideration, "M. le Directeur" thought he might take the responsibility upon himself. He signed the order on the back of the petition, and told me to get it registered. I breathed more freely, for I thought my troubles had ended; but I did not know French "*Comptabilité.*" After having it registered, I was told that I had to go to the "Controleur" to have the order drawn up. It was past twelve, and when I arrived at the office I was told that the official in question had gone to dinner, and would not be back

before two o'clock. Two o'clock came, and I was received, not by a bland diplomate, but by a hardened bureaucrate, who examined me closely, meditated for some time deeply on the case, and then told me the whole thing was very irregular; he would put on his visé, but could not give the order. That was the business of the "Inspecteur des Douanes Locales," who was at the Joliette. Off I went to the latter place, which is at the other end of the town. The Inspecteur was a good-natured, communicative man. He told me fairly he was puzzled by the case, he did not know how to make it fit. At last he asked whether the horses had been disembarked or not. I could give no answer, having left them in the morning with the servants on board, ignorant of their further fate. "I can do nothing until I know, for, *voyez vous*, if the horses are disembarked, they must be first naturalised and then denaturalised. I should be else in a helpless confusion with my books, and they are very severe in this respect. You had better go to the Receveur to see and find out the state of the case." It was towards evening, and in despair I ran along the quay to find the Receveur. I found, instead, my servants with my horses on a flat between the steamer and the land, neither allowed to go one or the other way, and pressed by the boatmen to leave the flat. Fortunately I met likewise one of the chief officials of the Messageries, who took pity on my case, and gave orders to transfer the horses to the steamer leaving next morning for Italy. This was indeed good news, but still I had no order to get the tickets for them. So back I went again to the good Inspecteur, who seemed struck by the simple way of the Messagerie agent. It was the egg of Columbus; and in his joy to be so well out of his difficulty, he promised to

telegraph to the Messagerie office. Trusting to the promise I went off there, and found no telegram had been received; consequently no tickets could be delivered. A fresh cab and another journey to the Joliette, this time to find my protector, the Messagerie agent. He could not help laughing, but told me all was right, and so it was. About 7 P.M. I had the tickets in my pocket, and returned to my hotel worn out, famished, and demoralised.

From this case it may be judged what the effect of the slightest change or unforeseen circumstance is, in the French customs regulations. There was no ill-will; on the contrary, with the exception of the sour bureaucrate who presided at the controlling office, all did their best; and yet, what annoyance! How much more must there be when such a change takes place as that of the 1st of October! The official becomes nervous, consequently irritable; the delays and the tiresome regulations have the same effect on the importer; and then ill-will on both sides makes the case doubly worse.

These little miseries had, no doubt, a share in depriving the 1st of October of its terrors, and they are likewise the chief cause of the complaints raised since by importers. Now that the panic is allayed, and the new system is beginning to work freely, they are diminished, although they can never completely disappear, unless the system of control is completely remodelled.

But far more than to the 30,000 French douaniers, the small result of what the new treaty has yielded in the beginning was due to the success with which the manufacturing interest had worked on

the panic, ignorance, and interest of the shopkeeper and merchant.

That distinction which exists in England between the manufacturer, wholesale, and retail dealer, is far less clearly drawn between the same classes in France. There is little of that subdivision of labour and of profits, which makes the contact between manufacturer and retail dealer in England a gross breach of etiquette, to be visited by the whole wrath of the corps of wholesale merchants. The old rule and principle, that goods never pass through other hands without leaving something of profits between the fingers, is still greatly in vogue. This is especially the case with the numerous industries and manufactures of Paris. Frequently, the shops are nothing but the offshots of the manufactures, and are entirely devoted to the retailing of their produce. In other cases, one manufacture furnishes the greatest part of the stock in trade, and the rest is made up either by direct sales or else by commission of articles of other, but never rival, manufactures. But even in cases where the shopkeeper starts on his own account, he applies directly to the manufacturer as soon as he can afford somewhat larger and regular commands, and in the mean time goes probably to the larger retail dealer for his goods. Besides, all the province comes to Paris, and turns, in nine cases out of ten, to a large retail dealer, or to a depôt of the manufacturer itself. The wholesale merchant has, comparatively speaking, little to do with this internal trade; his line is more foreign trade, and there it is more importation than exportation.

This process is apparent in those miles and miles of shops which form the astonishment and admiration of

foreigners and provincials. Many a person will have asked himself how all these shops can live and prosper. They are alimented by the whole trade of France: there lies the secret of their prosperity.

This solidarity between manufacturing interest and retail business made the first application of the free trade principles in France so difficult, and it will probably remain an obstacle to the establishment of true commercial relations between England and France, until antiquated ideas are given up, and a more enlarged view taken of commercial transactions. At any rate it had a good deal to do with the paltry result obtained at first.

The cries about impending ruin were great, but great were, nevertheless, the preparations to struggle through the crisis by fair means or foul.

The first effects of this preparation appeared in a number of small pieces of paper affixed to the articles displayed in the shops, and inscribed with figures, showing an astonishing cheapness, which had come all of a sudden over the good town of Paris—20, 30, and sometimes even 50 per cent under the usual price. It was visible in all articles in which competition was apprehended—tissues, carpets, crockery, glass, &c.—and announced the race for cheapness—that feature so much dreaded in British articles. On the contrary, other shops collected whatever they had of most tasteful and costly. In many cases they had articles prepared on purpose to dazzle the eye and vindicate the superiority of French manufacture as to quality. Nothing could be fairer than this competition; it was already a considerable gain to the consumer, and a good lesson of what free trade is. What must have been the profits

before, if, all of a sudden, such reductions could be made? was an argument difficult to resist.

But this was not all the preparation. The importers came and offered their goods, but found little disposition for *bonâ fide* sales. There was readiness enough to take the goods on commission, but nothing more. No doubt the want of initiative in the French tradesman had something to do with this; but it was far more the result of the combination of the manufacturing interest and of the direct connection existing between this latter and the retail trade. Ever since the calamity of the 1st of October was impending, the manufacturers spared no pains to impress this solidarity of interest on the bourgeois, as well as the consequences resulting from it, until the said bourgeois lost all wish to give up the certain for the uncertain. In many instances it required little exertion to bewilder him, as he was already under the effect of a vague panic, and in others the shopkeeper felt he was in the hands of the manufacturers, through whom he had been making his profits, and whose displeasure might end in his own ruin.

The success of this shortsighted combination was facilitated by another circumstance, and this was the imperfect knowledge of the French market on the part of, at least, the British importer.

For the general public the 1st of October was as good as a great racing day. The two first industrial people face to face in this struggle. This was at least the view taken of it, and considerable was the interest excited, as could be seen by the numerous groups which collected wherever the large affiches indicated the presence of English articles. The expectation was greatly disappointed. The French walked over the

course, as the saying is, in this industrial race, and the verdict was "ce n'est que cela." Nor was the verdict unjust; a quantity of "tapis à sujet," with hideous figures, and in more hideous colours, but wonderfully cheap, and side by side rolls of the commonest staircase carpets, wellnigh for nothing. Further on, a display of all that Manchester can produce of most tasteless tissues in silk, cotton, and wool, pure or mixed. Then again, ties which reminded one of Houndsditch, or caricatures of Chinese porcelain, here and there wretched imitations of Scotch woollens, and this not in the cheap shops high up on the Boulevard du Temple, or in the Faubourg Montmartre, but in the most prominent and frequented parts. Further east, the display showed canvass-like calico, Californian shirts, a collection of all the refuse of Sheffield cutlery, and a collection of old unsaleable woollens and cottons.

The whole seemed almost like a farce. Where were the woollens of Scotland and of the west of England, the linens of Ireland, the cottons of Lancashire, the tissues of Bradford, Leeds, the tasteful wares of Staffordshire, the unparalleled cutlery of Sheffield, the carpets of Kidderminster, and the unrivalled articles of so many other places? Not a trace was seen of them.

There have been complaints accusing the French shopkeepers of foul play and downright trickery, of buying or imitating the worst sort of English goods, and selling them at double the price, in order to discredit English goods. These cases may have occurred, but the display was too generally wretched for one not to seek for a cause elsewhere. English importers seem to have acted in the first instance as if Timbuctoo, Australia, or California, and not France, had been opened to their

manufactures. To make a master-feat of cheapness, and, at the same time, to get rid of all the old stores, seems to have been the leading idea which prevailed.

It showed a total ignorance of the market opened, or else must be ascribed to bad and interested advice from the other side of the Channel. Whatever enthusiasts on both sides may say, the industry of the two countries is about on a par. The cost of production differs little or nothing in most articles. Each of the two has specialties in which it is superior; and as both have a large export trade, both manufacture two sorts of goods, one for home consumption, and the other for exportation. There was plenty of time to study these conditions, but it seems to have been used but indifferently. The importations of France to England would have shown that the specific superiority of each people in certain manufactures must form the basis of their reciprocal intercourse; at the same time, intelligent agents sent over, would soon have found which of the articles in which England excels could be naturalised with advantage in France.

If this had been done, it would have been found that the best goods manufactured for home consumption were the most necessary in the beginning. France has the credit of being essentially the land of fashion, and the credit is deserved. The problem was, therefore, to make English goods fashionable; that is, have them taken up by the upper classes. This done once, the lower classes would soon have imitated the example of their betters. Unlike the trading classes, which had to defend their interest, the upper classes would have been found favourable. First, it was a novelty which had been long desired. They are not infected with Anglophobia; on the contrary, they have a strong tendency to Anglomania, which

has rather increased of late, and is cultivated as a distinctive feature from the mass. Dearness of the goods, instead of being an impediment, would have been an additional charm in these times of extravagance. "Monter sa maison à l'Anglaise" might have been the watchword of fashion for the winter of 1861.

Nor would this have been a transitory success, as fashions usually are. Use would have taught soon the undeniable superiority of certain articles, and naturalised them among the upper classes. Let us take some instances. First, those soft and elastic woollens, whether shawls, dresses, or hosiery—all so warm and comfortable, and so agreeable to the eye by their undecided tints; then those comfortable articles of household furniture, as carpets and arm-chairs, all the numerous articles of toilette—brushes, razors, &c.: those numberless articles in leather and steel, those simple antique-shaped glasses and crockery, sober in design and colour. Every day would have brought a new proof of their comfort and immense superiority in wear and tear, and accustomed those who used them to look upon them as a blessing which saves a great many of the "petites misères de la vie humaine." How good the disposition was in this respect one could see in the last steeple-chases of La Marche, which took place a few weeks after the 1st of October. Scotch plaids, mostly imitations, and in the most extravagant colours, were quite the mot d'ordre among all those who lead the world of fashion. Even inferior articles were thought better than nothing.

The fashion of English articles thus introduced would soon have spread among the masses, and taught them new comforts and necessities of life. It would thus have led to the demand of inferior, but still good articles.

But it will be long, if ever, that those bad articles, made for cheapness and exportation, will be accepted in that country.

First, there is an innate unwillingness to buy bad things merely because they are cheap. The French ouvrier prefers to be without them, or wait till he can afford something better. Whoever took the trouble of roaming about the Faubourgs in the first days of October, when there was an avidity to examine the English articles displayed, might have heard such remarks as, "Tiens, est-ce qu'ils nous prennent pour des sauvages?" Or, "C'est pas bête de croire que nous acheterons ça."

Then there is another not less weighty reason which opposes itself to the adoption of these articles. It is the difference in the life led by the lower classes in France—their different ideas of necessaries and luxuries. Most English articles are calculated for home life and home comfort; while the French lower classes have little or no idea of home life, and certainly no notion of comfort. They remain at home when they can go nowhere else. In their atelier, or out-of-doors, and engaged in work the whole day, they prefer, in the evening, idling about in the streets, or going to a café or "éstaminet," until the time comes for going to bed. The ouvrier sleeps at home, but that is all. What is the use of cheap carpets, crockery, &c., to him? Carpet is a luxury, crockery almost useless, as he takes his meals at the next wine-shop, and goes with his family on Sundays to some "éstaminet" at the barrières. If not with the man, with the French housewife, in the lower classes, saving and mending old things is almost a mania, which would scarcely find a satisfaction in buying bad things; she prefers good old things second or third hand.

It seems to me, therefore, that British importers have begun to work the new treaty at the wrong end, and have therefore their share, as well as others, in the small result which has been obtained hitherto. It is the consolation of England, that it must have reverses in the beginning of every war, and that this is a necessity which serves to develop her resources. It is a poor consolation, but may be applied likewise in the present industrial struggle. Having allowed to pass the first favourable moment, time alone can help to remedy the original mistake. As it is, a marked improvement is already visible since the first days of October; the best class of goods begin to appear gradually. On the other hand, French trading interest, relieved from the first panic, shows likewise a disposition to abandon that narrow-minded policy which may succeed for a moment, but can never be carried out for any length of time. It is this gradual understanding and approach of the two sides towards each other, which will lead to the true equilibrium in the new commercial relations of the two countries.

CHAPTER X.

SOCIALISM.

NOWHERE has the struggle between labour and capital taken a more violent and extreme course than in France. It formed the most prominent feature in the events of 1848 and of the subsequent years, and has contributed more than anything else to the establishment of the present régime. Fostered by wild theories, and envenomed by popular passions, the struggle between the two conflicting interests at last degenerated into a war against property, threatening to upset the very basis of society, and making all compromise seemingly impossible.

Not more than ten years have passed since in this struggle blood flowed for the last time in the streets of Paris—it was the blood of the bourgeois, on the 2d of December 1851, and since then bourgeois and ouvrier seem to have forgotten their old quarrels; they work together in harmony, only intent on increasing the national productions of France. The race of hot-headed turbulent ouvriers seems to have become extinct; and he who has been for years the topic of newspaper discussions, and of secret police reports, the political capital of agitators, the pet subject of philanthropists, and the

nightmare of governments, has scarcely been heard of for years. In the spring of 1859 he turned out unbidden to see off the Emperor, who went to fight for Italian independence; last autumn he went once or twice to the Place Maubert to give his opinion on the high price of bread, and the mismanagement of the municipal commission of Paris; and lately he attempted to protest against the clerical and ultramontane agitation at the occasion of Mr Renan's appearance in the Collège de France. With the exception of these harmless appearances in public, the ouvrier has kept to his atelier.

No wonder. He goes only into the streets when there is nothing to keep him in his atelier. Socialism in his eyes means bread; but even in his wildest moments the ouvrier never clamoured for bread except as a reward for his labour. All he insisted upon was the "Droit du Travail;" and he never before so fully enjoyed this social right as within the last ten years. Thanks to the impulse given to every branch of industry and commerce, the social problem, which had been hopelessly involved by theory, has received its natural practical solution.

And so naturally and easily did this solution come about, that it would seem almost as if it had been merely the result of favourable circumstances. After a period of distress caused by the financial crisis in 1847, and the revolutionary movements all over Europe, a reaction ensued, and French produce began to be in greater request than ever. Industries which had been wellnigh ruined revived; the workmen who had been scattered grouped themselves again round their employers; capital, which for several years had almost disappeared, came forward with a boldness unheard of

before in France. It covered the country with railroads, enlarged old industries, and created new ones; it metamorphosed cities, developed the mineral wealth of the country, and spread life and activity into every branch of enterprise. A short time before, all kinds of artificial devices had to be resorted to to feed the overgrown working-classes; and now high wages were promised to attract the agricultural population to the great centres. Every census furnishes new proofs of this displacement to an almost alarming extent. That of 1856 shows that, from 1851 to 1856, not less than two millions migrated from the rural districts and smaller towns to those containing a population of 20,000 and above, increasing these latter by more than one-third. The census of last year will probably indicate analogous results.

It is scarcely surprising that under these favourable auspices all trace of a former struggle between labour and capital should have disappeared. Common interest made the ouvrier forget his theories, and taught the bourgeois to widen his narrow-minded egotistical views. Both sides had felt that their extreme pretensions lead inevitably to the ruin of both, and past miseries opened the road to a compromise.

The struggle has ceased, there can be no doubt, and both sides are anxious to avoid whatever might remind of it. Is it an armistice merely, or is it durable peace based on good understanding? This is the question which must occur to every one who has known France during the internecine war of the two contending interests, and who sees now the apparent harmony which reigns between them. Is the solution only a fair day solution, or is it likely to resist those crises to which

the modern complicated industrial system is periodically exposed?

Ten years is too short a time to settle the question by the test of experience. Still they have not been uniformly prosperous and devoid of crises. There was first the high price of provisions in 1856, caused by a bad harvest; then the great monetary crisis in 1857, consequent on the large American failures; and last winter brought a combination of evils—a bad harvest; languishing trade produced by the American war; a monetary crisis, the result of over-speculation; financial embarrassment of the Government, and considerable political excitement, arising from the agitation of the clerical and anti-dynastic party, on account of the Roman question; and of a large portion of the manufacturing interest, dissatisfied with the free-trade policy of the Government. Although comparatively little was heard of the effect of so many adverse circumstances which weighed down on the country, the distress in some branches of industry, especially tissues of silk and cotton, was probably larger than in England. Mills were standing still, or working at short hours; weavers had to sell their frameworks, in order to live; a portion of the workmen migrated, in the hope of finding employment elsewhere; yet the storm was weathered with apparent ease.

Early in autumn the Government turned its attention to the subject, and watched the symptoms of the evil with great anxiety, and with the view of remedying as far as it was in its power. Already, in the middle of August, when only the first mutterings were heard about an insufficient harvest and depression of trade, a grant of 20 millions of francs (£800,000) was made

for vicinal roads, and, in spite of the financial difficulties, a tenth part of that sum was immediately placed at the disposal of the Préfets in the departments. After the Emperor's return from Biaritz, and during his short stay in Paris previous to the autumn journey to Compiègne, the main subject of all ministerial councils was the probable distress of the working-classes in the coming winter. Orders were issued to continue without interruption all the public works projected either by the Government itself or by the municipal and departmental authorities. The modest representations made by some of the latter about "too great burdens" were met with a smile, and the assurance that they would have to spend rather more next year. Later in winter, £80,000 was directly assigned by Government for the relief of manufacturing distress. Besides this, the municipalities were urged to take the matter in hand—to exert themselves, and stimulate the exertions of others. Unlike to former times, when the manufacturers left things to take their own course, they have been on this occasion beforehand of the authorities, in organising a regular system of relief, towards which private charity largely contributed.

Thanks to this foresight on the part of the Government; and to the ready co-operation of the manufacturers themselves, the crisis may be said to have passed away, and, according to the last accounts, things begin to look up again.

Financial and commercial crises will occur from time to time in France, as everywhere else; but the danger has been hitherto in France that every such disturbance revived the old question of socialism, and threatened to bring about a political and social catastrophe. This danger seems now considerably lessened.

A machinery has been brought into operation by the Government to obviate it; it may be an expensive one, but it is efficient, and must in the end be cheaper than a social and political convulsion. Indeed, if rightly understood, it will not be found more costly than the system of relief to the poor in other manufacturing countries. France has no poor-law system. Except in the case of foundlings and the insane, all assistance is purely voluntary; the numerous hospitals and other charitable institutions derive by far the greatest part of their revenue from foundations and donations, and the subventions of Government and departments is comparatively small, about £800,000 out of a revenue of £3,500,000.

The only regular machinery for the relief of the poor are the "Bureaux de Bienfaisances" and the "Sociétés de Secours Mutuel." There are 11,409 of the former, having a revenue of £700,000 to £800,000, scarcely one-fourth of which is derived from subventions of the State and contributions on the part of the municipalities, the rest arising from donations and foundations. The "Sociétés de Secours Mutuel" are, as their name indicates, societies of mutual assistance, established by private enterprise, the only assistance received from the Government being a grant of £400,000 at the time of their first establishment in 1853.

Thus, properly speaking, not more than about £200,000 are spent by Government and the departmental authorities yearly for the relief of pauperism, and even with the subvention for hospitals, foundlings, asylums, &c., only £1,000,000; while the poor-law system in England absorbs from £3,000,000 to £4,000,000. It would be unnatural to expect that this should be sufficient in a country only second to Great Britain in

industry and commerce; but instead of resorting to the workhouse system, which would have been repugnant to the ideas of the people, a system of public works has been substituted and organised on the part of the Government, and of the municipal and departmental authorities. The money laid out in the relief of the poor is thus turned to account to construct roads, ports, quays, to improve and embellish cities, reclaim waste lands and swamps, &c., which benefit the community at large without exposing the working classes to the demoralising influence of a workhouse system. The sums spent in this way by the Imperial Government have never exceeded more than £3,500,000 a-year; and it will be interesting, when the accounts for the last year are concluded, to see whether the relief given in this useful shape in France has been greater than that given under the poor-law system in England within the same period.

The system of public works in France is old, but the application of it as a poor-law system is due to Imperialism; and, if we are to judge by recent events, the application must be said to have been successful. The want of such a machinery in the crisis of 1847 had a great share in the convulsions which followed, while the exaggeration of it by the Provisional Government of 1848 led to even greater disasters.

If this success of the Imperial Government is alone sufficient to raise the hope that those deadly struggles between labour and capital may be in future moderated, if not altogether averted, there was another feature in the late crisis which goes far to show that the understanding between employer and workman, which has subsisted for the last ten years, has a deeper

foundation than the temporary prosperity which originally produced it.

Formerly, even in tolerably prosperous times, there was a sullen rancour nourished between the two, which broke out into recrimination and open hostility whenever trade was depressed. The most senseless accusations were brought forward on both sides,—the ouvrier laid his distress to the charge of the egotism of the bourgeois, and sought the remedy in a thorough remodelling of the whole social condition; the bourgeois, frightened by the violence of his adversaries, sought his safety in a system of repression, which increased the irritation.

All during the late crisis no trace of this old animosity was discernible. The employers co-operated to relieve the distress, and the workman, instead of refusing such help with scorn, as he would have done ten years ago, now gratefully recognised the interest in his welfare shown by the employer, and submitted to his guidance. Perhaps things would have been somewhat different had they not both felt the strong hand of Government high above them; but however strong this latter may be supposed to be, it could not have suppressed all trace of animosity between the two; and this would have come to daylight in some shape or other, had it really existed.

This may be so much the more fairly presumed as, actually in spite of every precaution, the working classes did not refrain from manifesting their discontent, not with their employers, but with the Government itself. It was that vague cry about mismanagement, which is usually taken up by the masses in times of distress. Things had been so prosperous before, that it

must be somebody's fault if they were no more so. There was no want of agitators to take advantage of this vague murmuring of discontent; the large expenditure and deficit, the heavy taxes, the treaty of commerce, corruptions and stockjobbing of high functionaries, which all had passed unobserved, or were disposed of with a joke when things were prosperous, now were formulated into so many griefs, and brought forward as the causes of the distress.

If, then, the working classes were freespoken enough about the Government, how does it come that they had no griefs to bring forward against their old adversary the bourgeois?

The impulse given by Government to the material development of the country, although the primary cause which made an approach between the two antagonistic classes possible, was not the only one at work within the last ten years for the solution of the great social problem. There was another agency which has powerfully worked in the same direction independently of the Government, very often in direct opposition with it, and which may claim some day or other the greatest share in the difficult task of bridging over the gulf which separated hitherto the employer and workman.

While theoreticians like Saint Simon, Proudhon, &c., were seeking the solution of the social problem in phalanstères, and building up a new world in the clouds, Mr Lavallée, a modest individual, whose name has scarcely been heard of out of France, worked at a more practical solution of the problem. He established in 1829 in Paris the "École Centrale des Arts et Manufactures," destined for the education of civil engineers, and of managers of every kind of manufacturing and

industrial establishments. Down to 1857 the École Centrale remained a private school; in that year it was ceded gratuitously by its founder to the Government, which names now the directeur, and grants £1200 a-year in scholarships. This school has been a nursery which supplied France with a number of independent and enlightened men, scientifically educated for their profession, just at the moment when a new era was opening out for industrial pursuits all over the world. Embued with liberal notions in matters of industry, and confident in their own power, the students of this school went forth so many apostles, combating those old narrow-minded views which had grown up under a long system of protection, amounting almost to prohibition, and trying to break the way for new ideas more in harmony with the spirit of the age. This quiet activity has probably contributed more to the gradual spreading of free-trade principles in France than any of the brilliant and fruitless discussions in the Chambers. In daily contact with the working-classes, they could not but open their eyes to the growing gulf which separated the employer from the bourgeois; but, like all moderating-influences in times of great excitement, they were overwhelmed by the extremes on both sides. The sweeping theories of socialists were more to the taste of the masses; and the bourgeois, who had been accustomed to look upon his workmen as the old noble had once looked upon his villains, either scouted the danger which was threatening him, or else, carried away by nervous timidity, dreaded lest the least concession on his part should place him altogether at the mercy of the mob. The catastrophe of 1848 terrified both extremes, and made them more tractable to moderate

counsels. The ouvrier found out by experience the fallacy of social theories, and contracted a horror to "ateliers nationaux" and "cités ouvrières," which seemed to him nothing less than an attempt at a colossal social barrack system; while the bourgeois saw that he was jeopardising life and property, if he did nothing but drive hard bargains with his workmen, and use his rights as employer to their utmost extent.

This was the moment for putting into practice those new ideas which the students of the École Centrale had been pressing in vain before, and which tended to establish the relations between employer and workmen on a more equitable and durable basis. Their position as a species of middlemen between the two, gave them great advantages for their task as mediators. Paid as they were mostly by fixed salaries, the ouvriers looked upon them as of their own class; while the employers, recognising the superiority of men scientifically educated for their profession, silently gave way to their influence.

The principle which has been followed in this work of reconciliation is—that social life in every sphere is made up of a succession of compromises. If every one was to use his rights, or any momentary advantage, to the utmost, it would lead to a general war, and human society would become an impossibility; that the interests of employer and workmen, if rightly understood, are identical; that what conduces to the welfare of the one is sure to turn out as a gain for the other; that the existence and maintenance of a healthy, intelligent, and willing labouring class ought to be an object of the special care of the employer; that it will repay amply any mo-

mentary sacrifice which may be made to it; and that the more is done to identify the interests of the workman with that of the establishment, the more he will exert himself to promote its wellbeing.

The epoch of unusual prosperity which followed the great commotion, greatly facilitated the application of these principles. It not only enabled all industrial establishments to give constant employment to their workmen, but likewise to augment their wages. Although the statistical returns of last year are not yet published, it may be calculated that the general average has increased by 40 to 50 per cent within the last two years; already, in 1855, at the time of the Paris Exhibition, the increase was one-third; it had been two francs a-day, and in 1855 it was three francs, including men and women. Since that time there has been a farther augmentation in almost all branches of industry.

The most important feature in this increase of wages has been that it was more rapid than the normal rise in the price of the necessaries of life. And this not only enabled the working-classes to live better, but likewise to make some provision for cases of illness, old age, and interruption of work. Whoever has known something about the mode of living of the *ouvrier* before 1848, will be astonished at the change which has taken place. The change is, above all, visible in the substitution of animal food for bread and the traditional "soupe," with lard and onions. A great proportion of the workmen who formerly had at most once a-day meat, now have it regularly twice a-day, in the forenoon and in the evening; the consequence, greater health and strength, which must strike at the first glance.

The successful application and extension of the truck

system has had a good deal to do with this change. It is principally flourishing in those groups of small manufacturing places in the east and north which are in an analogous position to those scattered about in Lancashire. It is carried out with the co-operation and under the control of the workmen themselves. The usual plan is to depute every day two of the number to superintend the distribution which takes place at fixed hours. These controllers are paid by their companions for the loss of time; but such has been in most cases the fairness of the employers, that controllers have been given up as a useless loss of time and money. In the larger manufacturing centres, like Paris and Lyons, the working-classes are too much scattered and intermixed to allow of the application of the truck system, and a species of "*pension ouvrières*," or eating clubs, takes their place. The model institution of the kind in France is admitted to be the "*Association Alimentaire*" of Grenoble, in the management of which the employers themselves take a considerable part, rendering their services gratuitously.

In the dwellings of the working-classes, likewise, a change for the better is perceptible. From obvious reasons, it is greater in the places where the working-classes are less crowded. An experiment has been tried in this respect at Mulhouse, which promises much, and has been since imitated in other places: single or double cottages have been built, with little plots for gardens around them, and they are let at a little higher rent, so that after a number of years the tenant becomes the proprietor. It is surprising what a change this chance of becoming a proprietor works in the habits of the workmen;—the public-houses in the neighbourhood feel it keenly. In the large crowded towns the

process of amelioration is more difficult; all attempts at building houses for the working-classes have been abortive. Ground being too valuable for building small cottages, large barrack-like buildings were erected; and they are the horror of the workman. He prefers the dingiest alley and the most dismal attic to the most commodious dwelling under a certain amount of control. Even the place built at Monceau for the vagrant chiffonier (rag-picker) is deserted. The demolitions alone may by degrees help to secure better dwellings for the working-classes in the large towns; they force them to migrate towards the outskirts, where ground is less valuable, and the houses are of small size. At present the *ouvrier* in the large centres lives, as of old, in the *atelier* and the wine-shop, and only sleeps in his garret; it must take a good many more demolitions before he will begin to appreciate a home.

The fair arrangement of wages must always be the basis of the understanding between employer and workman; but there is another device, which has been invented by the new industrial school, to cement the union. This consists in giving the workman directly or indirectly an interest in the management of the establishment. It has been now adopted as an almost general rule to give to the *ouvrier* a profit in the saving of tools, fuel, oiling of machinery, and thus to counteract the tendency to waste. Instead of supplying new or repairing old tools, a certain allowance is made for keeping them in good order with fuel and oil, the quantity required for full working power is given, and any saving bought back at half-price. It is quite astonishing to see in what order tools are, and how long they last, what small amount of fuel is required, how

bright the machinery, and how wonderfully clean the boilers.

But there is strong tendency in the new school of going even farther, and to associate the *ouvrier* directly in the profits when these reach a certain large proportion. The establishment which carries out this idea on the largest scale is the Orleans Railway Company, and railway statistics prove that it is worked cheaper than any other line in France, and that its clear profit per mile for each train run is far ahead of the others.* The management of the refreshment-rooms will show better than anything else how everything co-operates for the joint interest of the company and of the workmen. Unlike other lines, the company has kept the management of them in its own hands, and takes advantage of this to supply the employés and workmen. Whenever there is a surplus of one or another article in one place it is sent along to other places on the line.

All that is being done in this respect seems to point to the beginning of a novel system of practical socialism, which has no set theory, but works gradually, taking its light from experience. After ten years it can but be in its infancy; but it promises more for the ultimate solution of the social problem, as existing in France, than anything that has been hitherto devised.

Already it has done a good deal to break down that egotistical barrier which divided the race of employers from that of the workmen, as the system is calculated to bring the two into daily close contact, more on terms

* In 1860 the share of the servants of the company amounted to 2,181,503 francs, £84,000; while the dividend was 100 francs for every 500 franc share.

of equality. Any differences which might arise are more easily settled, and all those feuds, strikes, which played so prominent a part formerly, are avoided. There is an institution, dating from the first Empire, which contributes considerably to keep up the harmony: it is the Conseil des Prud'hommes, of which there are about 100 all over France. They are composed in equal numbers of masters and workmen, and judge of their differences, which are amenable to their jurisdiction; but their chief task, before giving judgment, is to try conciliation. These juries have very much increased in importance since the beginning of the second Empire, and the cases brought before them have nearly doubled. How successful the institution is may be gathered from the circumstance, that out of 1000 cases 970, on an average, end in a compromise. And there are quite 50,000 cases coming within the cognisance of the Conseil des Prud'hommes. By far the greater proportion of these cases is furnished by the small industries, and arise from individual grievances between workman and employer,—that is, where the mediating influence of the new ideas is less felt. In the large establishments the amicable interference of these juries is now rarely required.

Another important feature which shows itself wherever the new ideas have gained the upperhand is, that Government assistance and interference, so dear to every other class of Frenchmen, is not only not sought after, but as much as possible deprecated. In a country which has always been divided between servile supporters and deadly adversaries of the Government, the formation of an independent class, judging Government by its acts alone, can scarcely be overrated.

But while holding aloof from any partisanship for or against the Government, and steeled against all its allurements, nowhere else, perhaps, are the efforts of Imperialism to promote the material well-being of France better understood and appreciated than in this growing class of industrials of the new school. Among the first in embracing free-trade notions, they were of great assistance to the Government in helping to carry them out, and in persuading of their beneficial effect the parties most directly interested. They are fair enough to admit that they, and the whole French industry, owe a great deal to the judicious impulse given by the Imperial Government to the material interests of the country. They cannot but see how much assistance they can derive in times of crisis, like that of last winter, from the watchfulness and prompt measures of a clear-sighted Government. The latter may act partly in the interest of its own safety, but without its action all other well-meant efforts would have been sufficient. They may have their ideas, too, about political government as it ought to be, about freedom of the press and of the elections, about constitutionalism, and other "isms"; but from no other quarter is there less danger of any assertion of these ideas by material force.

From all that has been said it may be seen that there have been agencies at work in France of late to bring about a practical solution of that dreaded social question, and that in this respect, like in so many others, changes have taken place which promise fair to diminish the chances of those violent convulsions which have so often distressed that country, and reacted on Europe and the world. It was the complication of the political

movements with social questions which always gave them that violent and pernicious character; so that if this complication can be avoided in future, the political question itself will soon find its own level.

The Imperial Government seems to have been animated by this conviction when it turned its efforts first towards effacing the traces of the social struggle; and it shows a good deal of confidence in the success of its measures, that of late it has thought it time to take up the political question. In the mean time every year increases the chances of consolidating what has been done, by allowing time for the influence of another powerful agent, and this is the diffusion of education among the lower classes. About four thousand schools for boys, and over seven thousand for girls, have been opened since 1848, and the number of scholars has increased by more than one-fifth. The process may be slow, but the effect of education may in the end be more relied upon in this matter than any other cause.

CHAPTER XI.

DEATH AND RESURRECTION.

If the traveller sauntering through the noisy crowd of a populous town, full of life, found himself suddenly in the midst of a silent graveyard, he could not help being startled. Although prepared to meet with the traces of death where there is so much life, he would be struck by the close proximity of these two most formidable contrasts in nature.

Such a contrast of life and death forms one of the greatest curiosities of Imperial Paris. Not that Père la Chaise or the Cimetière of Montmartre has been transplanted into the Rue de Rivoli or to the Boulevards. The contrast is a psychological one, political lethargy, surrounded by exuberance of every other kind of life and movement—a people which has thrown itself, with all the vigour and energy of youth, into every sphere of activity except the one which seems more adapted than any other for the display and employment of all faculties. The impression is painful—something like that produced on us by persons afflicted with some natural defect, and trying to remedy the loss of one faculty by a violent and unnatural use of all the others. The impression in such a case will be doubly painful if

the affliction is not a misfortune of birth, but the result of accident, or is caused by the person's own fault, and if we remember the person when in possession of all the faculties. And this is the case here.

Paris sunk in political lethargy, is Paris turned deaf and dumb. Paris, which was so long the model for political life all over the Continent, that great hotbed of the most astonishing political and social theories—it lies fallow and barren: that eloquent tongue, which electrified half Europe with every word it uttered—it is mute and silent; that colossal brain, which seemed to have taken upon itself the task of reforming mankind—it is paralysed; and the bold pen, before which the mightiest have trembled—it has scarcely power left to trace meaningless flourishes.

The transformation is so violent, that we at first scarcely believe our senses; but soon indignation seizes us against the Imperial sway as against those wicked rulers of Byzanz, who sought their safety in blinding their adversaries. Willingly would we give all those marvels which surround us for one spark of the old genius. Immense pity seizes us at the sight of such calamity.

But no; we cannot believe that the sacred fire is extinct. It is smouldering under the mass of rubbish which has been heaped upon it to stifle it. If public thought be fettered, so much the more active will be the movement of private opinion and convictions. If the tribune be mute and the press gagged, the echo of their voices is still repeated by the people, the thousand-tongued. If it is the fashion and mot d'ordre to deride and blaspheme liberty in public, so much the more fervent must be the secret worship of the persecuted god-

dess. Such is our consolation; and being ourselves devotees of the goddess, we courageously start on our pious pilgrimage to search for the scattered embers of the sacred fire which has been banished from public altars.

The longer the search, and the more earnest the seeker, the deeper will be the feeling of disappointment and sadness. Ten short years, and all is forgotten, or remembered only to be cursed or laughed at. It seems incredible, and yet it is true. The artisan and workman, who once listened with devotion to the public reading of the papers in his atelier, and who might have given lessons in politics to many a silent or talking member of the Chamber of Deputies, cares no more about politics than the tool he handles. He has a vague sympathy for Italy, because he admires the man of the people, Garibaldi the pure, and because it is the French army which "made" Italy. The bourgeois is frightened at the very word politics, and reads piously his semi-official paper, from which he tries to gather what the Emperor is going to do next. Of the upper classes, the great mass care only for telegrams from abroad, and announcements of the 'Moniteur,' as influencing the quotations of the Exchange. Politics imply change and disturbance, hence risks and losses; they have been already the cause of much misery in the world, and above all in France. Let us guard ourselves against further temptation. Besides, politics are a social "bore," freedom a dangerous illusion, which is easily caught by the mob, and turned against their betters. Rather the rule of one man than that of the masses.

Worship of success, a comfortable feeling of ever-growing material prosperity, daily satisfaction of na-

tional vanity by the commanding position taken up by France, and, above all, utter want of faith in liberal institutions, have produced a state of quiescence and apathy in the great majority of all classes, such as the country has not possessed for the last hundred years. There are indeed, here and there, voices in the desert; some of them sincere, but they are neither listened to nor believed in, for they represent in the eyes of the sceptic crowd the cries of disappointed ambition. Having no faith themselves, the multitude believe little in the faith of others.

The more we examine and the better we know this psychological phenomenon, the milder are we inclined to judge Imperialism. Whatever the opinion be about the origin of it, never did power understand better the temper of the people it has to deal with. It had little if any share in producing the scepticism in liberal institutions; it took merely advantage of it to give a vent to energy in another direction, and to compensate for lost illusions by promoting the national wellbeing and satisfying national vanity. It is not in vain the Emperor has studied the 'Commentaries of Cæsar;' he has learned to know the "infirmitatem Gallorum quod sunt in consiliis capiendis mobiles, et novis plerumque rebus student." This "infirmitas," as well as the other weakness, that "*non solum in omnibus civitatibus atque in omnibus pagis partibusque, sed pene etiam in singulis domibus factiones sunt,*"—they were as true in 1848 as they had been nineteen centuries before.

This restlessness, always prone to extremes, and knowing no moderation, and party spirit, fiercer than ever before, had exhausted themselves in the wild

struggle from 1848 to 1851, and placed France at the feet of the new Cæsar.

More unrelenting and savage was the strife than any that ever raged between Gallic chieftains, for it was no more a strife of individuals, but of classes, a social and not only a political war.

So far remote is the origin of it, and so constant and implacable the antagonism pervading the different layers of society in France, that one would be almost tempted to see in it the vestiges of the hatred of race which conquest has aroused, and which reappears after centuries under another form. The Roman colonist and master who ruled the Celt with iron hand, the Frankish lord who succeeded and held under his foot both Roman and Celt, and the Celtic mass which hated both its oppressors—however much assimilated these elements may be in appearance, there seems to exist a repulsion between them which has become an obstacle to their amalgamation. While in England, Celt, Saxon, Dane, and Norman combined to break the royal power; here royal power found always the seigneurs ready to help in oppressing the towns, the towns anxious to assist royalty against the lords, and both combining against the people, until all three were reduced into servitude.

The weakness of the royal power in 1789 became the signal for the first great social outburst. The aristocracy tries to isolate itself, and claims a privileged position. The bourgeois, calling in the assistance of the people, sweeps away the privileged class. The bourgeois in turn attempts to monopolise power, and, falling under the resentment of the masses and of demagogues, opens the road for the 18th Brumaire and military despotism. After the Restoration the aristocracy again attempts the old

game. It is overpowered by the bourgeoisie in 1830. This latter again tries to shut itself up within a narrow circle. Another revolution in 1848, and the two hostile elements find themselves again face to face disputing for the mastery. The bourgeoisie triumphs in the bloody days of June, the vanquished masses revenge themselves by the election of their candidate in December. The "Assemblée Legislative" retaliates by becoming more reactionary, devising a scheme of double elections to keep out the masses from influence, and urging an expedition to crush the Republic in Rome. Another outburst and internecine war is impending, when military reaction, applauded by the masses, puts an end to the narrow-minded sway of the bourgeois, and ends the game altogether on the 2d of December 1851.

The social side of the struggle must be always kept in mind if we wish to understand the real character of Imperialism and the present state of indifference or even aversion to politics. The questions of property and labour brought out for the first time the secular antagonism of the two classes in its most formidable shape. Property gained for a moment the victory, but it was so dearly bought, and so precarious, that, for the majority of the victors, their own defeat by the *coup d'état* was almost a relief. That continual terror in which they had lived prepared them to accept wellnigh any power capable of protecting them against those who wished to deprive them of what they held dearer than life—property.

Both sides were exhausted. They saw they could never come to an understanding. Neither felt strong enough to be confident in victory over the other, and

rather than give in, each was willing to submit to the arbitration of the strong mediator. This explains the little resistance which was opposed on the 2d of December. In vain was the Faubourg St Antoine and Faubourg St Jaques appealed to; the proletaire remembered the days of June, and rejoiced that the turn of the bourgeois had come at last. This latter, with few exceptions, was equally deaf to the appeal, and did not care to expose himself for a government which he did not believe strong enough to protect him. No one stirred, and the *patres patriæ* were marched off to Vincennes.

The ten years of Imperialism has been a time of truce between the two adversaries; and it is but fair to say that they have contributed greatly to heal the breach which seemed almost irreparable. The impulse given to material prosperity, however forced, has profited both to property and labour; and the two sworn foes have begun to feel that their interests well understood were by no means incompatible. All that was wanted was guarding against extremes, and see the necessity of a compromise. On the other hand, the prominent position gained by French arms and diplomacy became another powerful bond of union—the greatness of the common country.

Under the soothing effect of these panaceas of Imperialism, France reposes from the giant struggle, and the success which has attended the cure hitherto has made many converts. The necessity of a strong government is the current phrase in use to this day. It is considered as the only means of preventing the flame of discord from breaking out again, and most are ready to sacrifice political freedom for social safety. There is

indeed, a small cluster of men remaining who believe that political freedom is the best cure against social discord; but this belief is by no means shared by the mass of the people, who wish only for the continuance of successful Imperialism. Above all, the bourgeoisie has become more reactionary than ever, and looks with suspicion at the insinuations of those who, without denying the great service which Imperialism has rendered to French society, think that the time has come to try another experiment with liberal institutions, and admit the people to a greater share in public affairs.

Twice within the last twelve months the Emperor has surprised his own people and the world by taking the initiative in this direction. To appreciate the true meaning of these steps it will be useful to cast a glance at the constitution of 1852.

Its traces are found in the appeals to the people to sanction the *coup d'état.* "The fury of faction is imperilling society." "I undertake to save it; will you trust me?" The appeal is made not on principle, but on personal grounds. The French people are asked to base their destinies not on some abstract rule, but to have confidence in one man.

This man assumes the whole executive power without control; he has the initiative of making laws; he declares war, makes treaties of peace, alliance, and commerce; fixes the order of succession,—in one word, has unlimited sovereign rights; but he is "the *responsible* chief of the French Government," (Constitution, art. 5). Article 6 defines this responsibility: "the Emperor is responsible to the French people, to which he has always a right to appeal." The constitution is thus, as it were, a realisation of the "pacte fondamental" of Rousseau.

The Emperor claims his power from universal suffrage, and recognises popular sovereignty as his judge.

The Emperor governs by means of the Ministers, of the Conseil d'Etat, the Senate, and the Corps Legislatif (Art. 3).

As the Emperor is supposed to be the responsible chief magistrate, the ministers are nothing more than his agents named for the direction of the different departments. They are not recognised as a body, and have no solidarity. They meet, indeed, twice a-week, but have only to discuss the questions on which they are consulted by the Emperor. Each of them is intent on his own department, cares nothing for his colleagues, and communicates directly with the Emperor. They are responsible only to him, but may be impeached by the Senate.

Of the three "great bodies of the State," the *Conseil d'Etat* is a kind of administrative and judicial council to which all new rules of administration and decrees of a certain importance are submitted. It is more especially charged with drawing up the projects of law, and some of its members are chosen to bring these projects before the Senate and the Corps Legislatif. It has five sections corresponding to the different ministerial departments, and a sixth judging of all questions arising between the administration and private individuals. The members are named by the Emperor, and are movable.

The Senate "is the guardian of the *Pacte fondamental*, and no law can be promulgated before it has been submitted to it" (Art. 25). If a law is contrary to the constitution, to religion, morals, &c., the Senate can oppose it. It regulates everything which has not been provided by the constitution, or which would em-

barrass the working of the constitution. It likewise interprets all articles which might be doubtful in the constitution (Art. 27). It maintains or annuls all acts which are represented as unconstitutional by the Government, or denounced as such by petitions (Art. 29). It may, in a report to the Emperor, lay down the bases of new laws of great public interest (Art. 30). It may likewise propose a modification of the constitution (Art. 31). It receives petitions, may impeach the ministers (Art. 45), and may, in case of a dissolution of the Corps Legislatif, provide for everything which the regular course of government requires. The members are high functionaries and other notabilities, and are named for life.

The Corps Legislatif, the produce of direct universal suffrage, has neither the right of initiative nor that of amendments in public sittings. Amendments are only allowed to be made before the commissions charged to examine the project presented. The Budget is submitted likewise to a commission which, according to the constitution of 1852, had only the right of rejecting it by departments.

In order to see the working of this rather complicated machinery, it will be well to consider the process through which a law has to pass. The bases of it are laid down by the minister to whose office the law relates. This first project is sent to the Council of State, where it is submitted to the respective section, which elaborates the project, develops or changes it; then the project drawn up is placed before the whole Council of State, where it is again discussed. If it is adopted it comes before the Corps Legislatif, where it is first examined in block, then submitted to a commission, the sittings of which

are not public. If amendments are made, they are referred back to the Conseil d'Etat, and only if approved by the latter are they inserted. Then the commission draws up its report, and a second discussion takes place in a public sitting of the Corps Legislatif. If the law is accepted, it is submitted to the Senate, which has to decide whether it be not contrary to the constitution, and which gives finally the order for promulgating the law.

From this short sketch it will be seen that the responsibility and control, as established by the constitution of 1852, is what strict constitutionalists of the old school might call a homœopathic responsibility and control; for the leading idea seems evidently to have been, that the smaller the quantity, and the more diluted it is, the more powerful will be the action of the remedy. The principle is new in politics; but as it has tolerably succeeded in medicine, the idea may have arisen of trying it in another sphere. The case seemed a desperate one. France was suffering from a general derangement, which had been caused by intemperance in the use of liberty, and made worse by "over-doctoring." Vigorous diet and small doses may have seemed "indicated" for this case.

By people with strong constitutions and more moderate habits, the allowance might be considered as very small.

Complete independence of the Executive, coupled with responsibility, are only intelligible if they are followed by this logical consequence, reward and punishment. How this can be applied in a case where the responsible chief magistrate is immovable, and where, in the next generation, he is to rule by hereditary right, is difficult to un-

derstand. The word responsible seems, therefore, rather out of place, and might be advantageously replaced by the word control.

According to constitutional ideas, the control over the Executive, to be efficient, must be directly applied by the representation of the nation. This idea is the result of costly experience, which has proved that this continual jealous vigilance can alone check the innate tendency of every executive to abuse of its powers. In France, experience has proved several times, that whenever the representatives of the nation were allowed a direct control over the Executive, a collision has followed between the two. In order to diminish the chances of a conflict, it was resolved to subdivide this power of control, and at the same time to place between the Executive and the national representatives, some pliant and elastic bodies to act the part which buffers do in railways. This laudable duty has devolved on the Senate and the Council of State; they are, by the constitution of 1852, supposed to restrain the impetuosity on both sides, and charm by their example of wise moderation. It is a goodly mechanism and a wise provision against accidents—it is only open to one objection, namely, that until quite lately there could be no accidents, for the Corps Legislatif was deprived of all power of motion, and its power of resistance was smaller than that of the Council of State or Senate; so that the three controlling powers of the State were propelled as fast and in whatever direction it pleased the Executive.

A recent example furnishes a good illustration of this. One of the duties of the Conseil d'Etat is supposed to be a control over the budget of the different

ministers; every supplementary and extraordinary credit, as well as every transfer (*virement*) from one department to the other, is referred to it: recent disclosures have shown how they checked the impetuosity of the Government. "Buffers" are useful where there is opposition and resistance; where there is none, they are only more or less costly ornaments, and sometimes even impediments: for instance, the Senate has a certain right of initiative; it may propose modifications of the constitution and projects of laws of a general interest. The only time this was tried was in the case of a rural code; but the Council of State raised the question, whether the right "of laying down the basis for a law" implied the right of the Senate to enter into all the details of the law. The Council of State, which has the "drawing up of the laws," maintained that this would be encroaching on its attributes; the Senate, on the contrary, whose right it is to explain all doubtful points in the constitution, pretended that it *could* discuss the details. The question was not decided, but the Government ordered the Council of State to prepare the rural code.

Although the control and responsibility, as introduced by Imperialism, might with justice appear a mere form, it would be wrong to despise this form. However awkward such forms may be, if the constitutional spirit arises it can take refuge behind them, and thus grow, and change at last the form itself. That these forms *are* dead forms, shows more than anything else that constitutional spirit is not alive in France. The sphere of activity may be small, the forms cumbrous, the official obstacles great; but if Poland and Hungary show their vitality under somewhat greater official

obstacles, and under rather more cumbrous forms, France, if it was animated at this moment by the spirit of freedom, could give easier signs of this spirit. There are plenty of opportunities.

Not a month passes without one or more supplementary elections for the Corps Legislatif—no liberal candidate ever starts, no liberal paper ever takes notice of the circumstance. If this fact is held up as a reproach, the answer is, We are not allowed to form committees, and Government influence is too great. But Ultramontanes do start nevertheless; they are often defeated, but they succeed sometimes; and at any rate, by their activity and perseverance, make themselves felt by the Government on more than one question. They have courage, and are ready for sacrifices, which shows that they have serious convictions.

When and where the spirit of freedom which has once animated this nation will revive, is difficult to say; hitherto there are but slight symptoms of a coming resurrection. To judge by these symptoms, it would almost seem as if in this revival, like in so many other things, the initiative and impulse should come directly or indirectly from the Emperor.

The purely personal character of his reign, which pervades his constitution, his government, and his policy, was the consequences of exceptional circumstances; indeed these circumstances are continually pleaded as an excuse for the anomaly. Exceptional circumstances and personal prestige are too changeable by their nature to build anything lasting upon them, and transmit the fabric to coming generations. The exhaustion produced by the social struggle of 1848 may end to-morrow, and personal prestige depends on

success, on which even those who have greatest faith in their star cannot invariably reckon.

To watch the revival of the dormant public spirit—nay, to arouse it, and lead it into a regular channel, and thus prepare the road for a more normal state, and less dependent on personal prestige—seems therefore commanded by dynastic as well as national interest.

There can be little doubt that this has been understood. The year 1859 is, in this respect, not less important for France than it has been for the continent of Europe. It marks the close of the transition-period, and the beginning of a new era. The championship assumed by the Emperor of the cause of national independence abroad, was sure to draw attention to the contrast which was thus established between foreign and home policy. A people held in tutelage, setting up the pretension of delivering others! There was, indeed, the difference that, in the latter case, it was foreign tutelage; but the popular mind could scarcely be expected to perceive this difference, while the whole peninsula of Italy was gradually asserting its rights to self-government, and even the Empire of Austria was obliged to yield, in appearance at least, to the new spirit. France, to whose initiative all this change was due, could not but feel mortified at the comparisons which naturally suggested themselves.

Little time was left for the growth and strengthening of this feeling. The great mass of the people was still under the narcotic influence of satisfied national pride, when the decree of the 24th of November 1860 heralded in an epoch of internal reforms, at a moment when no one dreamed and few cared for it in France. Ever since that time there have been successive steps in

the same direction, passport conventions, commercial treaties, freer movement of the press, the *Senatus Consulte* of the 3d February 1861, enlarging on the decree of the 24th November 1860, and quite lately the decree of the 12th November, and the *Senatus Consulte* of 10th December. The single steps may seem but small, but the direction is unmistakable.

Indeed it is clearly indicated by the Emperor himself in the letter he addressed to the Minister of State at the occasion of the last decree, which extends considerably the power of purse possessed hitherto by the Corps Legislatif. "Faithful to my origin," the letter says, "I look upon the prerogatives of the Crown neither as a sacred deposit which cannot be touched, nor as an inheritance of my fathers which I must transmit unimpaired to my son. The elect of the people, I shall always without regret abandon every prerogative useless to the public good, as, on the other hand, I shall keep undiminished every power which is indispensable to the tranquillity and prosperity of the country."

The promises of the powerful and mighty may of course be shadows, but the past has shown that the constitution of 1852 is not the last word of Imperialism, and the Emperor acted before he spoke the words of promise. The right of address granted to the Corps Legislatif and to the Senate, in which these bodies are allowed to discuss Imperial policy; the publicity of discussion granted to the Senate; the publication *in extenso* of the debates, instead of the meagre résumé allowed before; the right of amendment made more accessible to the deputies; and now the abolition of extraordinary and supplementary credits, and the voting of the Budget by chapters instead of departments,—all these

changes have altered completely the spirit of the constitution. The Senate and Corps Legislatif, which were little more than retarding administrative wheels, have, by these changes, begun to return to their former legitimate position as political bodies destined to control the actions of the Government.

The great step is made; what it will lead to depends on the disposition in which French public spirit wakes up from its lethargic sleep. May it awake sobered down from the last orgie which sent it to sleep! The debate on the Address last spring was not very promising, there were still considerable signs of drowsiness and ill-humour. It looked almost like anger at being aroused from the comfortable lethargy which vented itself in an attack on the liberal foreign and commercial policy of the Government. The old narrow-mindedness and acrimony seemed to have revived, and the world saw with astonishment that the representatives of the French people were more illiberal and retrograde than their Government.

But it would be wrong to be discouraged by their first exhibition; for it must be remembered that when the Corps Legislatif was elected in 1857, sleepiness was the great criterion of patriotism, and marmottes were thought the most eligible candidates, even before the annexation of Savoy. Already last session, after the new concessions, there was a general desire to see another popular assembly elected, more in accordance with the new position of the Corps Legislatif. Even before the decree of the 12th of November, it was rumoured that, after an early session this year, the new elections should take place. This is doubly necessary now; and until another Corps Legislatif meets, it can scarcely be said that France has made a fresh start on the path of self-government.

CHAPTER XII.

BODY AND MIND.

"PANEM ET CIRCENSES" was the motto of Imperial Rome, and a modest motto it was for the proud people which carried on its standard the high-soaring eagle as the emblem of its bold aspirations. Imperialism in France has adopted both the emblem and the motto, and prides in them. Of all the incense offered up by officious writers on the shrine of Imperialism, none is so much relished as those effusions in prose and verse which choose for their theme the resemblance between French and Roman Imperialism.

"Cæsar, who saves France from internal factions"—"Cæsar, who becomes the champion of the people against a tyrannical aristocracy"—"Cæsar, the father of the poor." But, more fortunate than his Roman prototype, Cæsar is able to give to French citizens "the seventy drachmas," "walks," "arbours," "common pleasures to walk abroad," in his lifetime, and needs no Mark Antony to announce these boons in his testament. The eagle is again restored to its former proud position, and is carried triumphantly into all the corners of the earth. Cæsar and Augustus in one person, the Emperor transforms Paris into a city of palaces.

The Tuileries have taken the place of the Capitol; to it kings and peoples are anxiously turning their eyes, for there resides the power which decides their fate. Amphitheatres and their savage games are out of date, but there is no want of "circenses" for that. The world has been thrown open as one large arena, to supply excitement and sport to the "grande nation." The stakes are not the life of a few wretched savages, but the happiness and misery of millions which depend on the nod of the Imperator. Even those most "blasés" must appreciate such refinement.

But however successful in the imitation or emulation of its prototypes in other respects, there is one feature of which Imperialism in Paris has not been able to learn as yet the secret from Imperialism at Rome. Not even the most injudicious friends of it have ever thought of accusing the former of having produced a "golden era" of literature. Indeed, if there be one charge brought forward against Imperialism more frequently than any other, by those who have no fancy for eagles or "circenses," it is the intellectual dearth which has come over France under the iron pressure of the last ten years.

There are no traces of a new Augustan era; on the contrary, even the old brilliancy of French genius seems to have faded away. Who has forgotten that long series of acute thinkers, bold theoreticians, inspired poets, brilliant historians, charming novelists, inexhaustible dramatic authors, powerful journalists, clever painters and composers, inimitable actors and musicians, who have succeeded each other ever since the Restoration in France? Who does not remember the influence which they exercised on the ideas and tastes, not only of their

own country, but of all Europe, by ridding literature and art of that traditional formalism which had hampered them so long, and by striking out a new path, rejecting old worn-out rules, and following boldly the dictates of their own genius? The long line has failed, and the source of inspiration is dried up. Many of the bright luminaries who shed such lustre once on literature and art in France have passed away, and those who still remain of the old race are a mere shadow of their former selves. Victor Hugo, the brilliant founder of the romantic school almost forgotten by his countrymen, but not broken in faith, has still some strings left on his lyre, but uses them to utter his dying cry of sadness and indignation. Lamartine has had to turn penny-a-liner in his old age, and to rake up painfully his reminiscences, to satisfy his creditors. Guizot draws in his turn on his souvenirs, or writes on the maintenance of the temporal power two long volumes, which no one thinks of reading or even of criticising. Thiers is laboriously spinning out his history of the Empire. Other celebrities are either silent, or only busy with their "Mémoires." The Dumases and Georges Sands are adding some more volumes to those which they have already written. Michelet writes poetry on the sea; Montalembert takes up monastic institutions in the West; and so on—all faint echoes only of once powerful voices. Scarcely raised, they die away, leaving no impression on the public mind. None of those works, full of genius and freshness, which once electrified the world, and gained that lasting fame for their authors on which most of them still live.

However painful this agonising process may be to witness, it is but a natural phenomenon which would

scarcely be remarked, had a new generation arisen to supply the place of those who had to pay their tribute to time.

The Turkish wag, Hodja Nasreddin, when asked what became of the moon when on the wane, replied that it was cut up and made into stars. One would be almost inclined to apply the astronomical notions of the Turkish wag to the literary and artistic spheres of France—such is the number of small stars which have arisen and are arising daily, while the larger luminaries pass through their last quarter, and by degrees vanish.

Indeed, if the number of litterateurs and the quantity of their yearly productions were taken alone as a test, the ten years of Imperialism might not only rival but would actually surpass any former period. So strange this may sound, it is borne out by figures. The number of yearly publications has doubled since the establishment of Cæsarism in France. In 1851, 7350 books and pamphlets appeared, while for the last two years the number has been close on 15,000, and this does not include musical publications, engravings, and lithographs, in which a proportionate increase has taken place. In the thirty years before 1851, comprising the most brilliant epoch of French literature, the average number of publications reaches not more than 6000 a-year.

Nor is there any lack of variety. Poems of all shades and colours—melancholy, gay, sentimental, and gloomy. Satires and idyls, elegies and chansons, dramas and comedies, tragedies and fairy-plays; novels, in all styles —historical, domestic, extravagant, pictures from social life; historical essays, economical dissertations, and philosophical researches on all subjects in heaven and

on earth, political pamphlets, scientific disquisitions; in one word, in the whole wide domain of literature, no corner is allowed to lie barren.

But what seems even more curious is, that in the periodical literature we see an almost equal productiveness. With the exception of the United States, a larger number of periodicals are published in France than in any other country in the world. To explain this mystery it must be, however, added, that out of the 1350 not more than 270 touch on politics, while all the others treat of literature, art, science, industry, and agriculture; hence are not subject to the exceptional régime which is applied in the case of political journals.

Yet all this fertility has scarcely produced a single work which promises to outlive its author, or brought forward a name which could be placed side by side with even the second-rate celebrities of the last generation. How many works of the last ten years, and how many new names are there which are known beyond a limited circle even in France, or which are remembered beyond a few weeks? There is not one of those works which formerly used to mark an epoch in literature, which were translated into all civilised languages, and became models for others—not one of those names which have become household words in France, and whose fame spread all over Europe. And yet never were there such facilities for bringing excellence, wherever it be found, before the eyes of the world—never was there such rapidity of communication and such close daily contact among nations. Had there been anything worth having in this luxuriant growth of the French mind, it would have long become the common property of mankind. Of course, it would be unreasonable to

expect a country to go on producing, without intermission, great poets, great dramatists, great historians, &c.; but neither seems it natural that a country which has more or less excelled in all branches of literature should all of a sudden produce nothing beyond respectable mediocrity in any of them.

The French themselves are keenly alive to this falling off in their position as the leaders of the intellectual movement in Europe; and most of those who consider themselves as the representatives of literature point to the Imperial régime as the main cause of this decay. Hampered and trammelled by restrictive laws on all sides, how is it possible for intellectual activity to soar above mediocrity? Not a line can be printed without the printer's informing the authorities of his intention; and not a work can be published or sold without his depositing two copies for inspection. In all publications under ten printed sheets a special copy must, besides, be lodged with the Procureur-Imperial (Attorney-General) at least twenty-four hours before publication. No play can be represented without passing the strictest censorship. Even the posting up of bills, and the distribution of any print or writing by hawkers (colportage), is subject to stringent and annoying regulations.

The answer to this charge is, that the restrictions are more apparent than real—proof, the prolific character of French literature within the last ten years; that the brilliant literature of France in the seventeenth and eighteenth century arose at a time when liberty was at its lowest ebb; that the restrictive measures are only rigorously applied in the case of periodical literature, and are so leniently handled in all other cases that

they do not affect much general science and literature; and that any one was at liberty to surpass Racine's 'Athalie,' Corneille's 'Cid,' the 'Meditations Poetiques' of Lamartine, or Guizot's 'History of Civilisation,' and not only would he find no impediment on the part of the Government, but the greatest readiness and encouragement. If no one did, it was certainly not the fault of the Government.

In spite of the continual assurances of the Government in this respect, it may be well questioned whether an author or a publisher could be found who would dare to put them so far to the test as to submit to the lenient interpretations of a censor an historical essay like Lamartine's 'Girondins,' or a drama of the stamp of Victor Hugo's 'Le Roi s'Amuse,' or some philosophical rhapsody in the style of Voltaire.

But, however numerous the lucky escapes be, there are the scissors of the censor, like a Damocles's sword, suspended over the unprotected heads of the authors. He cannot write a line without casting a side glance at those instruments of intellectual torture; and whenever the flame of inspiration threatens to rise rather higher than usual, a warning voice whispers, "Beware of the snuffers." The very existence of preventive measures must act as a check on the freedom of thought; and these preventive measures exist not merely with regard to the press, but overrule the whole social and political life of the nation.

Such are the complaints which may be daily heard in France whenever this subject is alluded to, and no doubt they are in a great measure founded on truth; for what is the literary activity of a nation but the reflex of its social and political life? and nowhere was

this intimate connection so strikingly apparent as in France. All the literary glory of modern France dates from the establishment of free institutions in 1815. The two were born together; they grew and increased, and they died together. They acted and reacted on each other, helping, stimulating, rivalling, and ultimately destroying each other.

It has been often a subject of inquiry how far the Encyclopedic school of the last century was responsible for the first French Revolution; but the question can never be fairly answered, without showing at the same time how great the influence of a corrupt social state, of a cynical aristocracy, and of an oppressed people, was in producing that disbelief and scepticism which formed the chief feature of that school. Similarly the future historian of modern France will have to seek the key to contemporary events in the literary as well as in the political and social movement.

With the fall of the first Empire a new spirit came over France. The national humiliation led to a miraculous conversion. The people, which for fifteen years had worshipped success, and believed in nothing but success, seeing its idol shattered, experienced a sudden reaction, and felt a yearning after a higher ideal. It set to work with an earnestness and a faith which is shadowed forth in all that was said and written during that epoch, and which appears in strange contrast with the former frivolousness and scepticism. It is not confined to one school, or one party, but forms the characteristic feature of all. The Royer Collards, the defenders of "throne and altar," have it as much as the Benjamin Constants and the De Foys, the champions of constitutional ideas. It animates that small phalanx

of stern republicans, who, undismayed by the failure of their first attempt, came forward again from their obscurity, the apostles of the future; it idealises the devotion of the scattered and persecuted remnants of Buonapartism, and forms the great charm of the chansons of Béranger, the bard of the people and its glory, the scourge of priests and nobles.

But it seems to be the fate of France to seek after high ideal standards, and remain invariably far behind them in reality; then, disgusted at the failure, to ridicule and drag down her idols, and return to scepticism and worship of success as the only divinity which can claim lasting respect and inspire awe. This corrosive influence, to which every idea seems exposed in France, arises from that logical tendency of the French mind, which, incapable of admitting any compromise between theory and practice, seeks to push the application of every idea to its ultimate consequences, rushes off into extremes, and thus oversteps the boundary between the sublime and ridiculous.

Thus the defenders of royalty and legitimacy, scarcely made masters of the situation, attempted to revive the pre-revolutionary system with all its consequences; and it was soon found out that the exalted cry for "throne and altar" meant, in reality, bigotry, hypocrisy, court favouritism, and aristocratic class interests.

The constitutional ideas which had their turn next fared equally bad. Handled by distressingly logical doctrinaires, who obstinately adhered to the *letter* of the Charte, they soon were exposed by their equally logical adversaries as one colossal system of sham—a packed sham Parliament, and a sham liberty, for the benefit of 100,000 bourgeois National Guard electors.

Republican and Socialist ideas were not more lucky. Perhaps more ardent and sincere than their predecessors, the leaders, just on that account, proved themselves so logical and impracticable, that it scarcely required a Jérome Paturot to start in research of the best of republics, in order to make them ridiculous, and destroy all faith in their doctrines. What wonder if the "grande nation," having lost all its illusions about magniloquent ideas, bows down now before one idea alone, that of success?

In order to appreciate fully this iconoclastic process, through which the French mind has passed since 1815, it must be remembered that the best authors of France, during that period, were, with few exceptions, likewise her most eminent politicians. Although not laid down in any of the Chartes and Constitutions, the principle, that literary celebrity is the stepping-stone to political greatness, has been the one most piously observed; and there is scarcely a case, before the establishment of the Empire, of a man having attained political distinction without this preliminary step. Author, journalist, and politician were almost synonymous. A clever "Prémier Paris" in one of the leading journals, or a stirring pamphlet, expanded an obscure writer over night into a full-blown minister. All vied with each other to be more original and startling in their theories, and more logical in their consequences, than their rivals; the unstable and impatient public hailed enthusiastically the new comer, and believed in him until he had the chance of applying his startling ideas, failed like the others, and was hooted down by his public. Served him right, was the verdict; he is a humbug, like all the rest. The failure was so uniform, that gradually a scepticism grew

up, not only about the writings, but even about the sincerity of the writers, and all they said was set down as a political bait—an imposition on the public. On the other hand, the political failure, and the distrust and scorn of the public, could not but affect the faith of the authors and politicians themselves, and make them waver either in their own convictions, or else, if vanity would not allow that, in the capability of the French to appreciate their value.

And this general scepticism has not been confined to those branches of literature which have a more intimate connection with the social and political life of a people; it has crept into general literature. The same causes have produced the same effects. The great charm of the romantic school in France has been its tendency to embody the leading ideas of the day, and present them to the people in their novels and plays. To search into all the most hidden corners of the national life; to rake up mysteries and horrors, and minister to the morbid tastes of their public; to imagine the most painful situations, and stimulate the feelings by a refined intellectual torture, adroitly mixed up with a false ideal picture of a world as it ought to be; to build up paradoxes, hold up wrong as right, and right as wrong,—such were the tenets of the school which made so much noise in the world, and exerted such influence for a time on the ideas of the nation.

The rivalry at such a game of disordinate imagination could not but lead to complete exhaustion and to ridicule. It was the natural course of things that the Victor Hugos and Balzacs should be succeeded by the Eugene Sues, Souliers, and Dumases, father and son. Fresh and more pungent condiments had to be supplied, in order

to gratify the vitiated palate of the public, until, like in the case of Frederic the Great, assafœtida had to be resorted to. 'Athalie,' 'Notre Dame de Paris,' and the 'Peau de Chagrin,' were naturally followed by the 'Mémoires du Diable,' the 'Mystères de Paris,' the 'Juif Errant,' and 'Monte Christo,' just as the natural sequel of the 'Dames aux Camélias' were the 'Filles de Marbre,' which in their turn were followed by the 'Filles de Plâtre,' which even the Republican Government thought to have so outstripped all bounds that it had them stopped.

Exhaustion of the imagination of authors, and surfeit and disgust on the part of the public, led to a reaction, and no one would dare now to come forward with any of those wild productions which, scarcely fifteen years ago, were devoured by the reading public. The author would be laughed at, and hooted down. People are sick of heated imaginations, and of angels and devils. They are matter-of-fact, sceptical and equivocal, are impatient of high-flown ideas, of high-sounding words, and want something real and tangible. There are no more ministries in store for authors, but the public will pay liberally for any clever dodges by which two and two can be made five, or if possible into six, or for some short pamphlet giving a clear statement of any leading question of the day, or else for a good laugh at a well-aimed satire.

The authors have courteously adapted themselves to the tastes of their "go-ahead" public. Instead of troubling it with endless novels in the style of the 'Arabian Nights,' they give their treatises on the art of making money, or short spicy tales, half-a-dozen to the volume; they caricature some well-known weakness, or else they give them a brilliant extravaganza, with plenty of "cancan" and short petticoats.

All this may not be very lofty and ideal, but it is amusing, and pays well. A successful hit—like, for instance, the 'Question d'Argent,' the 'Faux Bonhommes,' the 'Effrontées,' or 'Nos Intimes,' in which everybody can see himself or his friends faithfully represented on the stage—or else something in the style of the 'Pied de Mouton,' the 'Orphée aux Enfers,' with plenty of tricots—may give the author, if not immortal glory, at any rate £1500 to £2000 a-year. Aristophanes has supplanted Sophocles and Euripides.

The present materialistic money-making tendency has no doubt assisted to finish what the follies and excesses of the past had so well begun. Nations, like individuals, have only a certain amount of energy at their disposal; if they spend too much in one direction, little or nothing will be left for any other. With all this furious race after the "pièce de cent sous," little time and taste is left to enjoy and appreciate the charms of literature. Even in the theatres the satire must be very pungent, or else the "cancan" very "chique," in order to silence the whispers about the Credit Mobilier or the 5 pour cent Italian.

However much we may regret that the lofty tone of French literature, which, in spite of its extravagance, possessed such charms, should have been so lowered by scepticism and utilitarianism, and that those who were always soaring among the clouds should now never think of looking up towards the skies, this falling off is not without its advantages. It has sobered down the national mind, and done away with a great deal that was forced and unreal, opening thus a road for a more healthy and natural development. It has turned it into a practical direction, and at no time did exact

sciences attract so many students as at the present moment—an evident proof that it is not merely decay which we witness, but the germ of something new.

But to acquire again its former elasticity, the French mind must conquer the scepticism in which it has sunk, and regain its faith in something higher than the transient success of the moment and the "pièce de cent sous." To doubt that it will be so would be almost a crime; but the question when and how this will happen—whether, as before, it will be a conversion by some catastrophe, or else a gradual rise from the present disbelief—time alone can solve.

CHAPTER XIII.

GOSSIP.

It may seem presumption on the part of a "flâneur" to touch on the subject of Imperial policy at all, a subject so profound and mysterious that it has puzzled the shrewdest diplomatists, and has been given up in despair by the wisest political heads in Europe; but a "flâneur" has not to choose his subjects; he takes them as they offer themselves; and he would be untrue to himself were he to pass over in silence a subject which obtrudes itself at every step in France, which is the great moving spring of all activity in that country, which every Frenchman watches with intense anxiety, and on which every one has his pet theory.

In the heyday of journalism in France, the first thing a Frenchman did on opening his wet newspaper was to stop at the first page and devour every word of a long "*Prémier Paris*," barren of any substratum of fact, but full of fine sentiments, broiling indignation, or stinging irony, as the case might be. His choice was made, and he stuck to it. Whether the object of his preference was the 'National,' the 'Presse,' or the 'Constitutionel,' he loved it dearly, believed in it, swore by it, and was ready to fight all comers in honour of it.

His paper was his other self. He did not care whether the few facts it gave were true or not, nor whether there were any facts at all in it; but he saw himself, as it were, reflected in his paper, with all his prejudices, sentiments, and crotchets. All those vague instincts and crude notions which were floating about in his brain, he saw them clearly formulated in choice words. "*Très bien, voilà un gaillard qui connaît son affaire!*" was the exclamation of delight when some unusually well-turned phrase brought home to him some pet notion. He persuaded himself almost that the writer had overheard some of his own secret thoughts.

Very different is now the sight offered by the newspillars on the Boulevards at the hour of 4 P.M., the sacred time for the distribution of the evening papers, or at 9 in the morning, the time for the morning papers. 'La Patrie,' 'Le Pays,' 'Le Siècle,' 'Le Constitutionel!' shouts the little boy who runs about busily with his heap of papers still wet from the press. The bourgeois stops perplexed at the rich choice offered to his craving appetite, and is puzzled which to choose. He has no personal preference for any, for he has lost his faith in all of them; all he wants is to find out which of the official, semi-official, officious, and more or less inspired journals, represents best what the Emperor will do next. It is a lottery, as he has found out at his own expense. The 'Patrie,' which was right yesterday, is proved by the 'Pays' of to-day to have been completely wrong. The 'Constitutionel' of to-morrow will leave not the least doubt that both were misinformed; while the 'Moniteur' of the day after will have a "communiqué" in large type, informing the world in general that there is no such thing in France as a semi-official,

officious, or inspired journal, and that there is but one official infallible paper, and that is the 'Moniteur' itself. The declaration deceives no one, as long as the habit prevails among ministers, and other more or less influential personages, to make use of the press for their own purposes, and to keep writers as hangers on.

At last when the choice is made, no one even bestows a glance on a "*Prémier Paris*" unless it be placed so prominently and in so large type as to excite a suspicion of its having emanated from an official source. It is the third page, with the paragraph headed "*Dernières Nouvelles*," which is the chief object of attraction. This is an invention which dates from the Italian war, during the course of which the 'Patrie' began to publish in its evening editions official information about the war, and the habit remained by prescription after the close of the war, and has been adopted by all papers more or less.

This paragraph of "Latest Intelligence" is the political meteorology of France, far more exciting no doubt, but far less reliable, than Admiral Fitzroy's weather prophecies. No wonder; Admiral Fitzroy is the only prophet in his line who appears in public, while there are half-a-dozen of rival political prophets in France, all with more or less pretensions to inspiration, and jealously catching and distorting each other's predictions. Then Admiral Fitzroy has some positive data to go upon, and frankly admits that there are all kinds of currents and disturbing influences which are as yet unknown; admitting any such shortcoming would destroy immediately all authority of the political prophets in France, so they fish about among the "currents" and disturbing influences, and land "*canard*."

after "*canard*," which they are often forced to swallow. But, in spite of all contradictions, modifications, untruth, and inaccuracies, so puzzling is the Sphinx of the Tuileries, that any guess at the riddle, however wild it be, is received gratefully by the public.

Don't let us be hard on the bewildered Frenchman who catches thus at the slightest thread, in the hope of finding his way in the dark labyrinth of Imperial policy. There are plenty of other wise people besides foolish Frenchmen who have snatched at such frail things, which not unfrequently existed only in their heated imaginations.

Nor will it seem surprising that in France, which has seen nearer, and felt more acutely, the effects of the extraordinary career of its Emperor, and the strange contradictions of his policy, there should be an even stronger tendency than elsewhere to take those extreme views of it which are the most approved ones in other countries.

These extreme views have been typified in two theories, which may be best characterised as the spiritualistic and the fatalistic theory. The first is that of those who, astonished and overcome by the success which has smiled hitherto on their Emperor, try to explain every one even of his most insignificant acts and words, by seeking for some deep-laid secret scheme. According as the partisans of this theory belong either to the adherents of the Imperial régime or to its adversaries, there is a difference in the appreciation of these deep-laid schemes. In the eyes of the first, it is invariably one which will powerfully promote the welfare and glory of France; while in the eyes of the latter, it is only another of those infernal devices of egotism

conceived in the dark mind of the Demon Emperor to enslave France and the world, and to carry out which all means will be resorted to, however immoral, treacherous, and degrading they be.

The other theory is that of those who, either impatient of the success of Imperialism, or else driven to despair by its continual surprises, have persuaded themselves that all these contradictions, uncertainties, and half-measures, show nothing more than the want of principle and plan of action, and that Imperialism lives day by day, and that all the success is owing to hazard and fatality. As with the famous three propositions of Kant, both sides find plenty of arguments drawn from past and present events to prove their case in the most evident manner. In the mean time, the great mass of the people never takes the trouble to inquire whether all that has come to pass was merely the effect of a capricious hazard, or of angelic or demoniacal agency; they see the success, and find it conduces to their own interests; they watch it anxiously, and rarely reflect as to what it will lead to. Nay, there is a positive aversion to enter into this last subject—a kind of unwillingness to be disturbed in the full enjoyment of a successful present. In vain do the prophets of evil raise their Cassandra voice, and in vain do the partisans of the fatalist theory sneer and cavil—they produce not the slightest impression on the popular mind.

However short-sighted, nay culpable, this indifference may seem, there is more truth in this instinct of the masses than in the speculations of the theoreticians. It represents, as it were, the protest of common sense against the one-sided appreciation and exaggerations of

both theories, which make anything like a fair and impartial examination of events impossible.

Without resorting to angels and demons, and without making mere accident and hazard responsible for a long-continued series of successes, much that is dark and seems unintelligible in Imperial policy becomes clear by an unprejudiced survey of the personal history of the Emperor, especially the two early phases of it, —his life in exile and the *coup d'état.*

Having, by the death of his brother and of the Duc de Reichstadt, become the representative of the pretensions of his family, he found himself in one of the most hopeless positions which it is well possible to conceive. The failure of the revolutionary movements in Italy, Spain, and Germany had given an opportunity to the reaction all over Europe to acquire a strength such as it had never possessed before, and which the July Revolution in France only contributed to increase. Indeed, in this last named outbreak the leaders themselves were so frightened at the spirit which they had raised, that they lost no time to allay it, with almost indecent haste, by choosing Louis Philippe as King of the French. What made things even more desperate for all Napoleonic pretenders, was that the fear was from the Republic and not from Napoleonic pretenders, whose very name seemed to have been forgotten by France.

A cause so hopeless could not reckon on sympathy and assistance except from the champions of causes equally or more desperate—the secret societies, under different names and pretexts, which had become all over Europe the last refuge of those liberal and national aspirations, to which the reaction had closed all legitimate vent and activity elsewhere. It seemed a strange

alliance this between the Revolution and the representatives of him who had curbed and diverted its course; and yet it was not so strange either, for every page in history shows such temporary alliances of unsuccessful causes against a common enemy; and then what was this alliance but a return of Napoleonism to its source, the Revolution? What was Napoleonism itself in its origin but the successful overthrow of old dynastic and legitimist pretensions, and the propagation, by armed force, of those ideas of nationality and popular sovereignty, which had been proclaimed by the first French Revolution as the new public law which is to rule the world? It was by forgetting this, its origin, that Napoleonism came into antagonism with those ideas, and expiated the ingratitude by its fall. That a Napoleon, with half the world at his feet, should be guilty of such ingratitude, is not more surprising than that his nephew should remember the lesson for which he was paying by poverty and exile.

And yet the lesson was not learned at once, nor from the fault of others. Witness the failures of Strasburg and Boulogne, which showed that, amidst all his helplessness, Louis Napoleon still lived in the illusion of being able to revive Napoleonism on its own merits, without the help of revolution, nay, in opposition to it, by a simple military emeute. Four years of prison at Ham dispelled these illusions, and probably did more than anything else to bring home the conviction that Napoleonism had neither sense nor chance of success, except in intimate alliance with those principles of nationality and popular sovereignty, of which the General Buonaparte was the armed torch-bearer in Europe.

This conviction could not but cement the union

between the Napoleonic pretender and those scattered apostles of the new ideas, who were pursuing their course, undaunted by failure, and in spite of all difficulties. It is the remembrance of this union, early begun and long continued, which keeps up, in spite of all "appearances," the faith of many in the sympathies of the Emperor for the cause of freedom and nationality. Nor would it be natural if the attraction which great and generous ideas, and the self-denial and enthusiasm of their advocates, exercises on youth, had been altogether lost on the Emperor, who followed their fortunes during the best part of his life. But it would be perhaps hazardous to lay too much stress on these early recollections; they may have been dimmed by the halo of the Imperial crown, or else rendered unpleasant by those little vanities and ambitions which are found to exist not less among the obscure apostles of new ideas than on the great stage of the world.

The important feature in this long association of the Emperor with the activity of the advanced party in Europe is, that he was enabled to follow closely the rapid growth and irresistible expansion of those ideas of freedom and nationality. In vain were violence and sham resorted to by their adversaries; they served only to strengthen faith and increase aspirations: and dull indeed must have been the mind which, in the face of such evidence, would have failed to perceive that they are the ideas of the age, which, sooner or later, must prevail; that he is doomed who refuses to recognise them, while he who is bold enough to lead them on to success may rule the world.

This long insight into the growth and working of modern political and social ideas constitutes the great

superiority the Emperor Napoleon enjoys over other sovereigns, who have never seen anything beyond the narrow circle which surrounds them. It was this insight which forced upon him the conviction, in 1859, that it was high time to act, or else to be prepared to see the movement find another champion, and escape control altogether. However cautious the initiative may have been, and however far it may have remained behind expectation, it was sufficient to change the face of Europe, to constitute an Italy, and to force even the most reactionary sovereigns to break, at least in appearance, with their traditions, and come to a compromise with their peoples. Nor was the reward for the good deed long in coming. The advantages and the prestige gained by the war of 1859, by strengthening his power at home, allowed the Emperor to make the first step towards relaxing that system of restrictions which had prevailed since 1852; while the bold championship of national rights acquired for him in the councils of Europe one of the proudest and most formidable positions a sovereign could aspire to.

These facts are too patent to admit of a doubt of the Emperor's just appreciation of the spirit which moves Europe; he evidently understands "Idealogues" better than his uncle did, and has—it matters little whether from sympathy or necessity—recognised that Imperialism can have no lasting foundation but as the champion of popular and national sovereignty.

If, nevertheless, we see these ideas still so crude and undeveloped in practice, nay, often so thwarted and opposed as to make them appear a mockery, we must seek for some obstacle and disturbing cause which has hitherto prevented their becoming a reality.

All unprejudiced persons in France have long deplored this disturbing cause in the *coup d'état*, which placed Imperialism from the outset in a false position, and which weighs upon it still with all the heaviness of a curse. It was a strange fatality, indeed, which forced the champion of popular and national sovereignty to establish his claims, in the first instance, by an act of arbitrary violence. No doubt the reactionary spirit of the Chamber was threatening to produce another social convulsion more bloody than any before. The Legislative Assembly, having passed a law abolishing universal direct suffrage, had violated the very basis of the Revolution of 1848, of which it was an offshoot. No doubt the *coup d'état* was approved of by eight millions of votes; but, for all that, the very first act of the Empire was a contradiction to its own principles. This first act necessarily led to others. The new system had to be consolidated; and this could not well be done, after such a beginning, but by the introduction of a complete system of repression. All individual and political freedom had to be suspended; the partisans of those very ideas of popular sovereignty had to be proscribed; and, in the first instance, priests, soldiers, and *employés*—that is, the most decided adversaries of them—resorted to, to establish Imperialism. In this manner the Empire was from the beginning forced deeper and deeper into that labyrinth of contradictions, uncertainties, and vacillations in which it is still wandering about.

There is a strong feeling in France that all this might have been avoided, and this feeling exists just among those who are the advocates of the same ideas which the Empire has so often proclaimed as its own. It is a common belief that a direct appeal to the people would

have been from the first as efficient as bayonets, and would have established the Empire free from this incubus. Whoever remembers how thoroughly disorganised and torn by factions the people was, as well as the Assembly, in 1851 — how the leaders of the reaction were as ready to resort to violence as he who adroitly had the start of them,—whoever remembers all these things, may perhaps entertain some doubts about the efficiency of an appeal to the people. But even if the possibility of such an appeal without a civil war might be proved, it would be of little avail ten years after another solution has taken place.

Whether it was mistake or necessity which led the Emperor into the labyrinth, it is but fair to say that he has manfully struggled to get out of it; and the difficulties which he met with in this attempt to make the Empire into what it pretends to be were not slight.

First and foremost among them were the pretensions of those who, either directly or indirectly, were made instrumental in the establishment of the Empire. Like true Frenchmen, they thought themselves entitled to monopolise the whole success for themselves. Instead of seeing that the system resorted to in the beginning was an abnormal and exceptional one, which cannot last, they only felt that they had profited by it. They dreaded every change, however slight, which might disturb this wellbeing, never perceiving that, by trying to keep too much, all may be lost again. This what might be called the Imperial party brought, and with few exceptions still brings, their whole dead weight to bear on, whenever they apprehend an intention on the part of the Emperor to move. They were always the most determined adversaries of any relaxation in the system

of restrictions at home; they looked with the greatest suspicion on the Eastern war, opposed in every way the Italian war. They tried last year all their resources to dissuade the Emperor from enlarging the power of the Legislative Assembly; and they now move heaven and earth to reverse the policy which dictated the Italian war, or at any rate to keep up the *status quo* in Rome. No doubt the influence of the individuals of this party is small enough on the councils of the Emperor, but their united dead weight tells. It must be remembered that the Emperor is no more the exile Louis Napoleon, who could and did see the world with his own eyes, who could hear and watch the movement of popular ideas and opinions. He must now rely for his information on others, and try as best he can to gather the truth from their garbled accounts. Whenever any step in a liberal and generous direction is under contemplation, the clique vie with each other to paint the dangers likely to result from it in the gloomiest colours, and to represent France as on the brink of an abyss. Besides, these are the very men who are intrusted with the execution of all plans, and with the control over their execution. It may be imagined with what good-will they apply themselves to the task—how liberally they interpret every measure; so constant indeed and assiduous is their kind care, that every generous thought dwindles down, until little more remains of it than a shadow, and the world begins to suspect that all was but a sham. On the other hand, the jealousy and greediness of this party forms a constant subject of satire and indignation to the public, and, whether deservedly or not, brings discredit on the Imperial régime.

The question naturally obtrudes itself, Why not make another *coup d'état* with them, as it would be even more certain to be applauded by France than that of the 2d of December? The reply must be, It is the curse, the first *coup d'état.* It bred suspicion against all those who are not servilely devoted, and admitted of no intermediate class between sycophants and deadly enemies. Whoever showed the least trace of independence was put down into the last category.

This suspicion may not have been without foundation in the beginning, when a wholesale razzia was undertaken against all that was prominent in France; but it might have long ceased were it not adroitly fostered by the Imperialists, who dread competition, and have an interest in making themselves indispensable; and it is owing to their well-combined efforts that all attempts to bring about a reconciliation with the old parties have failed. In the very last attempt, when, at the invitation of the Government itself, some of the bolder ones came forward as candidates for the municipal councils, the préfets brought all their influence to bear in order to exclude them as "suspicious."

Suspicion on one side naturally increases the hostility of the other. How can it be expected that those who are treated as political lepers should find it their interest to support Imperialism—to persuade themselves of its stability, and to give up plotting? And yet, considering the general political scepticism in France, the consequence of the successive breaking-down of all political theories, there can be little doubt that the great mass of these "suspicious characters" would have long ago bowed down before the success, had it not been for this jealousy on the part of the Imperialists. As it is,

they are found to stand aloof in armed neutrality, if not in hostile array.

The Empire thus moves in a sort of vicious circle, which threatens to maintain that false position in which it was placed by the *coup d'état*. This vicious circle is strengthened by those who, from one or another reason, can never be reconciled with Imperialism. Their number is exceedingly small, but their activity is so much the greater. It all tends to strengthen the Government in its mistakes, and always lends a helping hand whenever this latter has a reactionary mood upon it.

Behind these false friends, presses, in the same direction, the great crowd of the middle classes, unprincipled, timid, egotistical, and politically the most uneducated and most prejudiced class of the country. Woe to him who would rely upon them; he would find them intolerant and exacting in good fortune, and cowardly in reverse. The success of Imperialism has won them over to a man, but they would be the first to turn round and hoot down their idol if he dared to be unsuccessful. It was their frantic cry which lately resounded in the discussions in the Senate and in the Corps Legislatif. While all these agencies tend to push the Empire towards a reactionary policy, and to keep up that fatal contradiction between its avowed principles and its practice, there stands in the distance an indifferent spectator, the mass of the people, uneducated, but sound at the core, and not without generous instincts, which require but fostering to become developed. Of all the people in France, the artisan and ouvrier of the great towns alone divined instinctively the great idea which lay at the bottom of the Italian war, and he was the only one dis-

satisfied with the abrupt close of it, which left the idea but half realised. He showed his feelings in the matter by the ovation which he made at the departure of the Emperor for Italy, and by the coolness which he manifested at his return, in spite of the laurels and trophies brought back. The feeling was genuine, for the transactions about Nice and Savoy were then unknown.

With such obstacles in the way as a flagrant violation of the principle of popular sovereignty at starting, an egotistical, grasping set of officials, a host of suspected enemies, a band of false friends, and with no other elements to work upon but an unprincipled, narrow-minded middle class, and an ignorant popular mass, the wonder is not that so much uncertainty and vacillation should be visible, but, on the contrary, that all efforts to rule otherwise than by force have not been long given up in despair. These perplexing uncertainties are a healthy symptom, which show that the struggle to get out of the false position is more earnest than ever.

"Compromise" is the watchword in this struggle. To allay old feuds, to create common interests by stimulating national ambition and national welfare, to abate the extreme pretensions of parties, to reconcile old and new ideas—such is the constant aim visible. As the balance oscillates in one or in the other direction, each party claims the victory.

In a country which has been always lost by its rushing into extremes, this "*jeu de bascule*," as it is commonly called, may not unfairly be interpreted as a preparation for free institutions, which are based on an equilibrium and moderation of parties and ideas; but there must be some strong basis which no swinging process will

upset. In France the whole game is artificial, and its safety lies in the strength of the government which keeps it in its hands.

The people must be first educated for it practically. It is not in the Corps Legislatif that such an education can take place; it must begin lower down. All the violence, impracticability, and want of temper which have always characterised French Assemblies, originated, in a great measure, in that want of a preparatory school which local self-government alone can supply. Men who never had even the right of moving without the authority of the Government—who, in their own communes, had not the least control over their functionaries or the most trifling improvements—were called upon to treat high political subjects, and decide the fate of governments. There is a growing feeling in France among that small cluster who look beyond the present, that the too great centralisation is the great evil from which the country has been suffering so long, and that nothing can be done until this relic of the old governments is done away with.

The Imperial Government itself boasts to have done a good deal towards decentralisation; and, in the 'Exposé of the Situation of the Empire,' which was presented this year to the Senate and Corps Legislatif, the progress made in this respect is pointed to.

The progress amounts to this, that the administration has been simplified, and that many local affairs which had formerly to be brought before the Ministry of the Interior are now left in the hands of the préfets. The 'Exposé' boasts likewise of the full freedom which has been left to the initiative of the municipal councils, and to the Conseils Généraux of the departments. The

misfortune is, that few believe or even trouble themselves in France about this freedom, the importance of which they are not able to appreciate; but, in spite of assurances to the contrary, all such freedom must be desultory as long as all magistrates, down to the Garde Champètre, are functionaries appointed by Government, responsible only to their superiors, and not impeachable before the tribunals for any act of abuse of power they may have committed—as long as these functionaries have an overpowering influence in the elections of municipal councils, and as long as the Government possesses the power of dissolving unruly councils, and replacing them by commissions appointed by the selfsame functionaries.

This system of centralisation is not new; it has been steadily followed and perfected by all the successive governments, whatever their name may have been; it has taken deep root in the French character, and has produced that tendency towards the centre of government which is so striking. It pushes the young men of the village towards the town in the vicinity, and from these towns towards the capital. Paris is the magnet which attracts all imaginations, and any energy which might be required for local affairs is considered either as a loss, or else as merely a disagreeable intermediate stage which must be passed through.

And yet it is in these local spheres that Frenchmen must learn moderation, fair party play, and acquire the habit of handling political problems practically before they will be fit to be trusted on the larger arena in the capital. Until this is done, the very idea of a compromise, at which the Emperor seems to aim, will not even be understood, and the "jeu de bascule" will appear

as uncertain shuffling, which merely tends to confirm the disbelief in all fixed principles.

No one has a greater interest in giving to Frenchmen this taste for local self-government, and teaching them the value of it, than just the Government itself. Had this interest been rightly understood by preceding governments, many of those violent convulsions which have changed so often the fate of France might have been avoided. The rigid system of administrative centralisation had so accustomed all France to follow, sheep-like, the orders which came from the capital, that a small number of bold men who could get up a successful émeute in Paris found no difficulty in making themselves masters of France. They got the mainstrings of the administration into their hands, and imposed their will on the provinces. How different might have been the issue had there been even the slightest trace of that spirit of independence which such local self-government is alone able to keep alive and develop! Imperialism, which has been so successful in its other attempts of changing Frenchmen, of eradicating prejudices, awakening new ideas, teaching new pursuits, would probably be equally successful in forming the taste for local self-government; and the success in this respect would do more than anything else towards consolidating what has been done. Local self-government would be at the same time the surest and safest way of rousing gradually the people from that state of political torpor and scepticism in which it is sunk, and to conjure those violent transitions from lethargy to extreme violence which are so characteristic in French history.

The Emperor has shown, by the concessions he made within the last two years, that he does not indulge in

the illusion that the present torpor will last for ever; while the exhibition which senators and deputies have made of themselves during the late debates must have convinced him, as well as the world, how incapable Frenchmen are still of free institutions. It seems, therefore, high time to think of educating them in the only way this can be done.

The Imperial Government, it is true, loudly disclaims all imitation of parliamentary party government, as unfit for a people which requires a strong executive to arbitrate between conflicting interests; but it nevertheless admits the principle of control over the Government. To exercise such control in a reasonable manner, to understand and appreciate the difficulties and embarrassments of the Government, political education is just as necessary as for party government. Men who have learnt at their expense how difficult it is, now and then, to manage even the affairs of a petty commune or town, to reconcile all those petty interests, at war with each other, and to "make both ends meet," are more likely to take a charitable view of the embarrassments to which the government of a great country is exposed, than men whose judgment is exclusively formed by ideal standards and theories.

That idea of a compromise between old and new ideas, which can be distinctly traced in internal affairs, is even more apparent in the Emperor's foreign policy. It originated in a similar contradiction and false position. Brought forward by the Revolution, the Emperor's very name was a threat to legitimacy, and the establishment of the Empire the first "*coup de canif*" to the treaty of Vienna; on the other hand, the *coup d'état* itself, and the expedition to Rome, whether voluntary

or forced upon him, were little calculated to inspire the national parties in Europe with much confidence in the good intentions of the ruler of France.

Both sides, therefore, watched eagerly which way the balance would incline towards old or new ideas. In the beginning the former seemed decidedly the more weighty, and the whole foreign policy of France seemed only intent on persuading crowned heads that they had an ally, and not an enemy, in the new Empire. The Eastern war, directed as it was against the most open champion of reaction in Europe, and undertaken as it was in alliance with liberal England and Sardinia, re-established for one moment the equilibrium. The subsequent years destroyed it again, and Imperial policy abroad seemed to gravitate more than ever towards old sovereigns and old ideas. Indeed, all hope of seeing the Emperor espouse the cause of freedom in Europe seemed so utterly gone, that he was at last considered as the chief obstacle to any improvement in Europe. The Italian war changed this despondency into sanguine hope. Villafranca somewhat sobered down these hopes; the annexation of Central Italy again raised them: Nice and Savoy depressed them; and so on up to the present time.

Amid these uncertainties and contradictions, from which the foreign policy seems to suffer, there stands out, however, the broad fact that, owing in a great measure to the initiative of the Emperor, those ideas of national independence and popular sovereignty which the Empire professes have made great progress all over Europe, leaving little doubt which way the balance is inclining here as well as at home.

This attempt at a compromise in both cases proceeds from the same apprehension of extremes, and proves

that desire to act as mediator and arbiter between them.

The Empire has been lately defined by Prince Napoleon as the "organised revolution," that is, a deliberate orderly transition from old to new, adopting the principles laid down by the Revolution of 1789, but establishing them, not by violent popular commotions, but by the direct agency of the Government. The definition is a happy one as regards the aim and tendency of Imperialism; but as yet the work of organisation is far from complete: it must begin in France, and there the process of transformation is still at its height.

Indeed this transformation, and the rapidity of it, is the characteristic feature which obtrudes itself at every step in France.

Change, change, change is written up everywhere. Men, ideas, pursuits, country, town—all things, living and inanimate, proclaim it loud. But short ten years have passed, and a new world has arisen. Old types gradually disappear, and new ones take their place. No one would recognise in the civilised being dressed "*comme tout le monde*," and swaggering up and down the asphalt of the Boulevard, the reckless, eccentric student, the inhabitant of the Bohème of Murger. The gay, modest grisette of Béranger, that charming compound of affection and selfishness, devotion and "*gourmandise*," has dropped her coquettish cap and "*robe de percail*," and has been metamorphosed into the dashing Lorette. The timid French capitalist, who was invariably left behind by foreign enterprise, now hurries on headlong after the Mireses, and displays in this race a recklessness calculated to frighten even the bold Anglo-Saxon. The bourgeois National Guard, infected as

usual by the mania of his betters, seeks for a place where to hide his traditional "*bonnet de coton*," and brings out his dear five-franc pieces, which he had been treasuring hitherto with such anxious care. The imaginative Frenchman, the plaything of theoreticians and agitators, always ready to follow any high-soaring Icarus into the clouds, turns now with scorn from the finest phrases, and has chosen as his motto the advice of Faust, "that grey is all theory, and green the tree of life." The gay witty Gaul, with his keen sense of enjoyment, indolent and violent in rapid succession, finds now no time for either wit or enjoyment, and hurries through life as if he wished to make up for the time he has idled and trifled away before. The very cabman and his horse, those emblems of all that was slow and stationary, are trying to get the better of their aversion to rapid evolutions.

So quick has been all this transformation of people and country, that, if it continues another ten years, Imperial France promises to be as different from what it was before 1848, as the British Isles are now from the time when they harboured Plesiosauri and Ichthyosauri.

What the transformation will ultimately lead to, no man can tell; but every one who is unprejudiced must see that it has been successful so far. This has been its chief merit, and forms its chief danger. To precipitate as much as possible this process of transformation, and to be *successful at any price* while the process is going on—such is the difficult task which Imperialism has to perform. Until this task is completed, the apprehensions and uncertainties which surround it must last. The success which has attended its efforts hitherto was

sufficient to reduce the active enemies of the Empire to insignificance, but not to procure sincere friends on whose support it might reckon under all circumstances.

The transformation must be complete; the "popular sovereignty" which the elect of eight millions has inscribed on his banner must be a reality; and those national aspirations which threaten to convulse Europe must be satisfied, before the present ready acquiescence in success can become sincere partisanship, and before all uneasiness about the future will be allayed.

THE END.

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